漫画家は、
肩こり・腰痛・骨・眼精疲に
なりやすいと聞きますが、
どれにもなっておりません。
このまますっとこの状態で
いられますように！

勝木 光

Baby Steps

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

14

勝木 光

KCM4381

KC

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 14

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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

14

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Baby Steps

人物紹介

鷹崎奈津（ナツ）

エーちゃん 丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。「次の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。そして依然、友達以上恋人未満。

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート

佐々木梨子

エーちゃんのクラスメイトで、試合には必ず応援に来てくれる心強い応援団。

影山小次郎

清水亜希

コーチである母親と二人三脚でプロを目指すジュニア日本一の選手で、ナツは彼女に4戦全敗中

岡東隆行

STC所属。関東にほぼ敵なしの実力を持ち、プロが目標。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。エーちゃんの一番身近にいる女の子。

Baby Steps

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#123 SPIRIT OF OPPOSITION·····005
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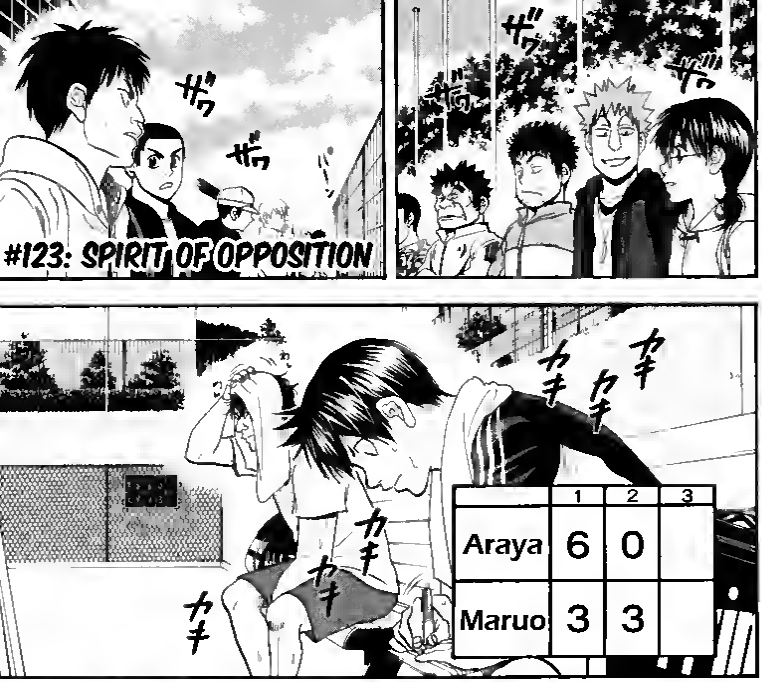
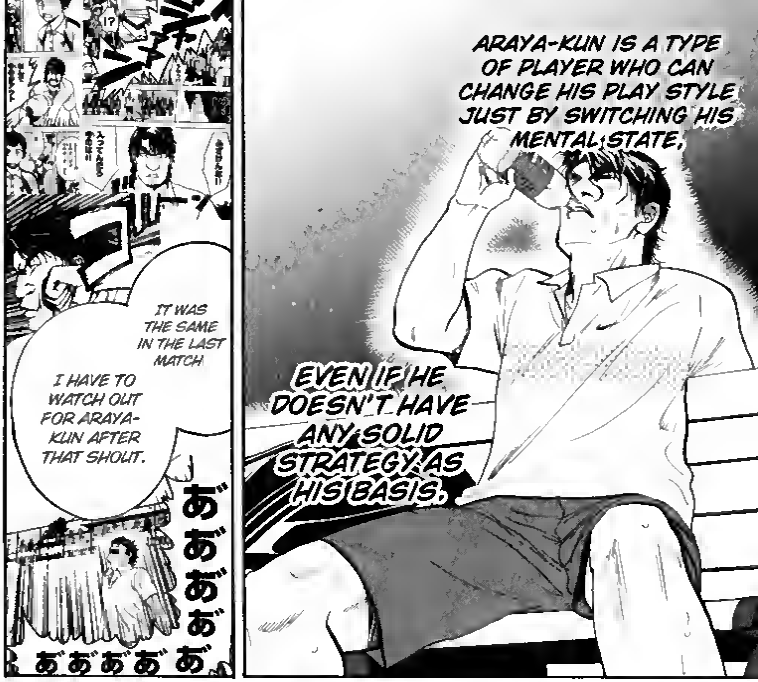
to Giant Strides


#123: SPIRIT OF OPPOSITION
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
カキ
カキ
カキ
カキ
カキ
1 2 3
Araya 6 0
Maruo 3 3

BUT, IT PROBABLY WON'T BE THAT EASY FROM NOW ON.
EVER SINCE I WIDENED MY CHOICE OF ATTACK, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO LEAD THE GAME TO MY LIKING.


ARAYA-KUN IS A TYPE OF PLAYER WHO CAN CHANGE HIS PLAY STYLE JUST BY SWITCHING HIS MENTAL STATE.
EVEN IF HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY SOLID STRATEGY AS HIS BASIS.
IT WAS THE SAME IN THE LAST MATCH
I HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR ARAYA-KUN AFTER THAT SHOUT.
おおおお

5 - 0 ALREADY!? SO FAST !!
GAME, TAKASAKI. 5 - 0. SECOND SET.
10 ｱｳﾄ
ﾄﾞｯ

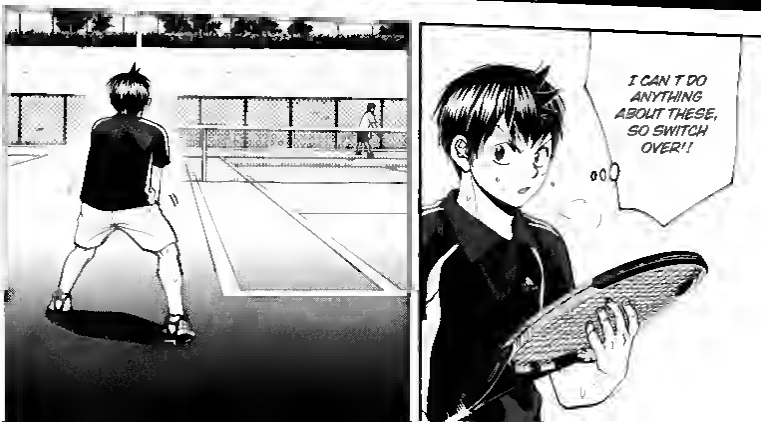
SHE'S MORE INTO IT THAN USUAL...
SHE SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING HERSELF.
ぶっ
THE MOST ENJOYABLE MATCHES ARE THOSE KINDS OF MATCHES
EVEN IF SHE'S WINNING, HOW CAN SHE ENJOY THE MATCH LIKE THAT WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH PRESSURE?
THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID. NOW NOW, CALM DOWN
ANYWAY, ARAYA-KUN WILL BE STEPPING UP HIS GAME FROM NOW ON.
TIME!
ビュッ

IN THE END, I CAN'T WIN IF I DON'T OVERCOME ARAYA-KUN AT HIS BEST...

FOCUS...!

HH
!!

15 - LOVE.
HA!
OH~!
IT'S AN ACE!!


I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THESE, SO SWITCH OVER!!

NGH~
パン
!!
30 - LOVE.

TWO ACES IN A ROW!!
おお
HOW CAN HE SUDDENLY INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF HIS FLAT SERVES LIKE THIS...
NICE SERVE, ARAYA-SEN-PAI!!
JUST BY LETTING OUT ONE ROAR...

EVEN THOUGH I HAD TO TRY ALL SORTS OF THINGS AGAINST THAT LEFT-HANDED POWER AND SPEED,
AND SACRIFICE THE FIRST SET IN THE PROCESS
TO FINALLY DISCOVER A BREAKTHROUGH THAT CAN PUT ME AT AN ADVANTAGE...

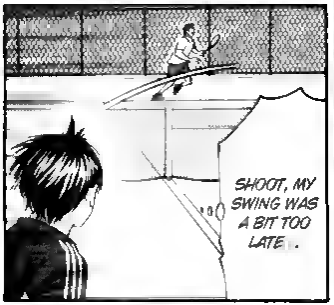
HA!
HA!
LIKE I'D LET HIM TURN THIS OVER!!
THAT EASILY!!
ORYA AA!
OHH!
NICE RETURN!!

IF I HAVE THE UPPER HAND LIKE THIS,
I CAN GO WITH 1/64!!
RGH~

EVEN IF IT'S ARAYA-KUN'S SERVE AND HE'S ON A ROLL, I CAN GAIN THE ADVANTAGE IF I TAKE RISKS.
OUT. 30 - 15.
YES !!
HUH...? HE'S BACK TO HIS ORIGINAL RETURN POSITION.
AND IF I'M BACK HERE, ARAYA-KUN WILL WITHOUT A DOUBT GO FOR A..
IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE THE CENTER OPEN WHEN HIS SERVES ARE IN GOOD CONDITION.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

RGH~

WIDE SLICE!!


SHOOT, MY SWING WAS A BIT TOO LATE.

40 - 15.
IT DIDN'T WORK EVEN THOUGH I SAW IT COMING.

TCH.

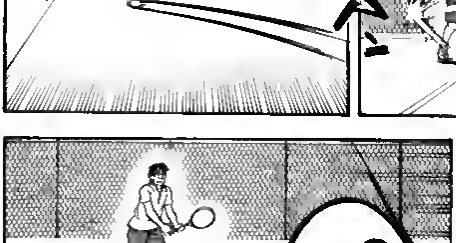
GAME, ARAYA. 3 - 1. SECOND SET.
HELL YEAH !!
HA!
HA!
10
	1	2	3
Araya	6	1	
Maruo	3	3	
I CAN TAKE THIS SET IF I KEEP THIS LEAD.
BUT THE SCORE IS 3 - 1...
CRAP.
GUESS TWO BREAKS IN A ROW WAS A BIT OF A STRETCH...

NO MATTER WHAT!!

I'VE GOT TO KEEP THIS...

MY FIRST SERVE WENT IN...!!

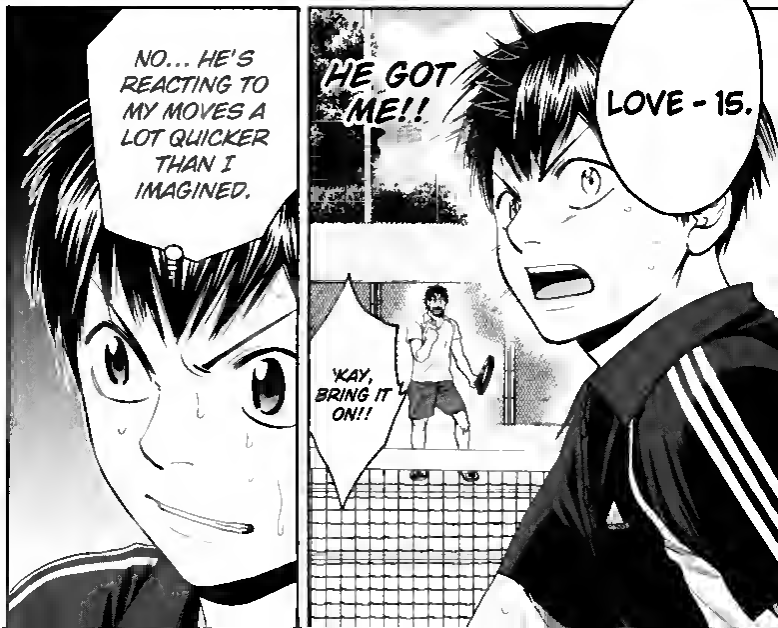
HA!



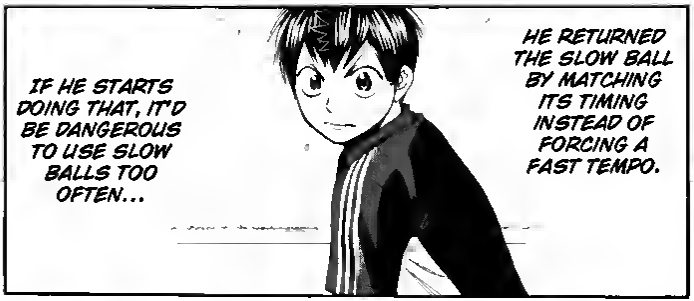
SINCE I HAVE THE UPPER HAND, MY NEXT CHOICE IS A .

HIGH-LOOPING SHOT, DEEP INTO HIS BACKHAND!
SMALLER STEPS THAN USUAL...

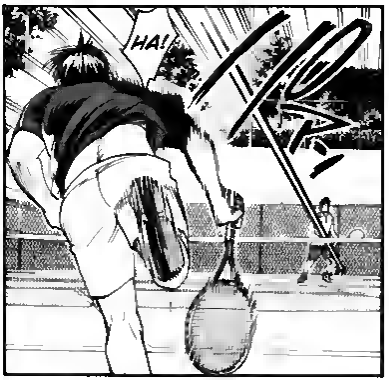
ノー
K


NO... HE'S REACTING TO MY MOVES A LOT QUICKER THAN I IMAGINED.
HE GOT ME!!
LOVE - 15.
'KAY, BRING IT ON!!

THE REASON HE'S QUICK AT CORRECTING HIS MISTAKES DESPITE HAVING A VERY ROUGH STYLE
MIGHT BE BECAUSE HE'S ALWAYS BEEN NO. 2 BEHIND TAKUMA.
THAT'S TRUE...
HE MUST BE USED TO JUMPING RIGHT BACK BECAUSE OF ALL HIS LOSES.


HE RETURNED THE SLOW BALL BY MATCHING ITS TIMING INSTEAD OF FORCING A FAST TEMPO.
IF HE STARTS DOING THAT, IT'D BE DANGEROUS TO USE SLOW BALLS TOO OFTEN...

RAH!


HA!

WHILE FOCUSING ON FAST BALLS...
WHEN SHOULD I CHANGE THE PACE
AND WHERE SHOULD I TARGET TO CRUMBLE HIS PLAY IN ONE STROKE
I'LL TEACH YOU YOUR LIMIT!

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imangascans
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Cleaner: Stark
Translator: Auggie
Typesetter: Busaway
Proofreader: Galaaza
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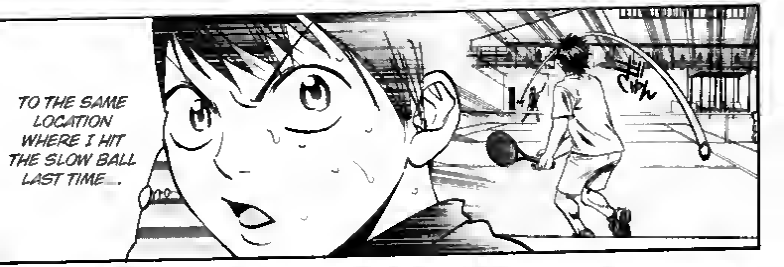
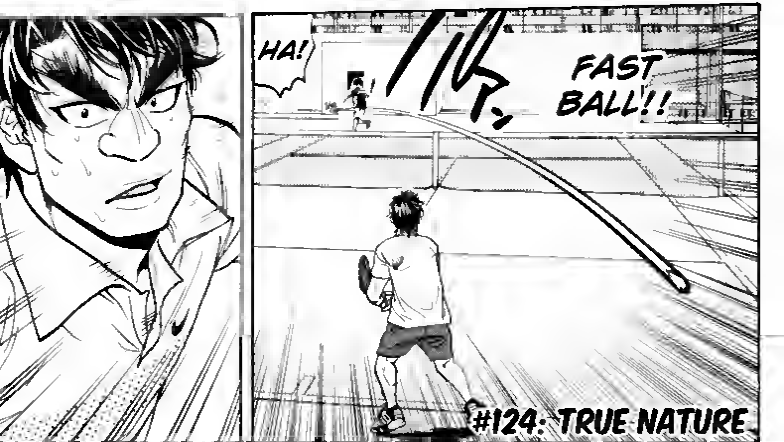


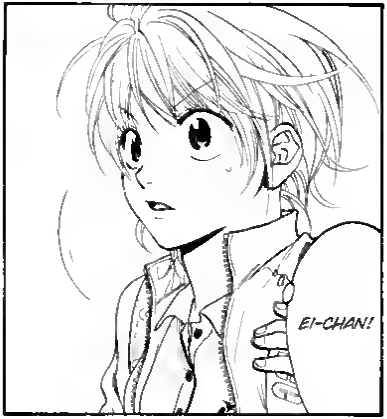


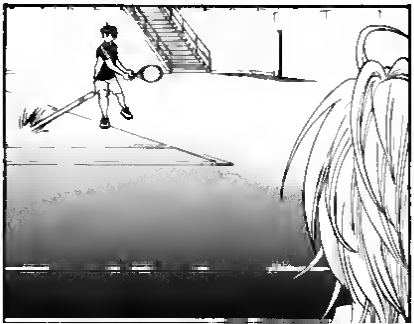
#124: TRUE NATURE

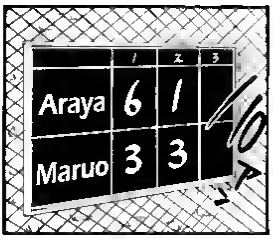
HE LOST HIS BALANCE, SO...
HUMPH.
FU
OPEN COURT!!
10 P.
HA!
15 - 15.
FU

OKAY...! THAT SLOW BALL FROM LAST TIME HELPED ON THIS ONE.
TAKASAKI NATSU IS THE TWO-TIME CHAMPION OF KANAGAWA!!
GAME, SET, AND MATCH WON BY TAKASAKI. COUNT: 6 - 1, 6 - 0.
GOOD JOB!! CONGRATU-LATIONS!!
NACCHAN WON!!

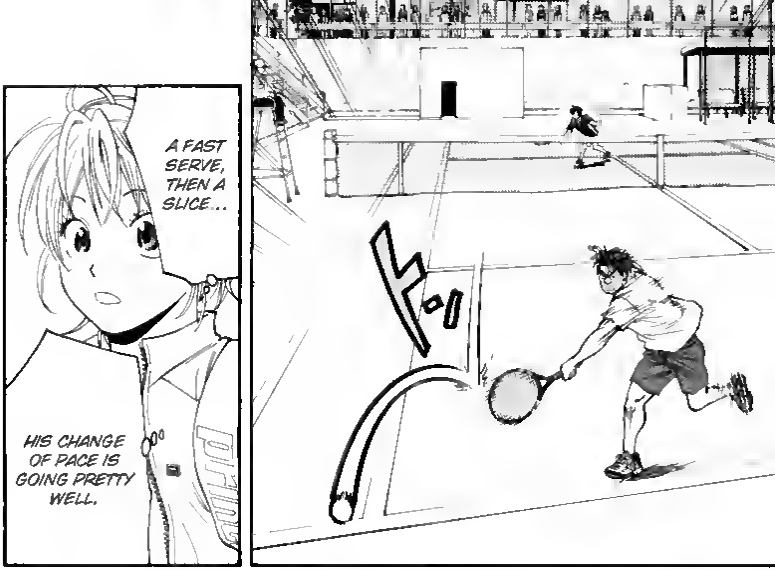
HA!
...OKAY!


EI-CHAN!

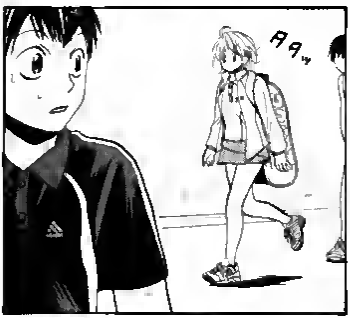



1
2
3
Araya 6 1
Maruo 3 3

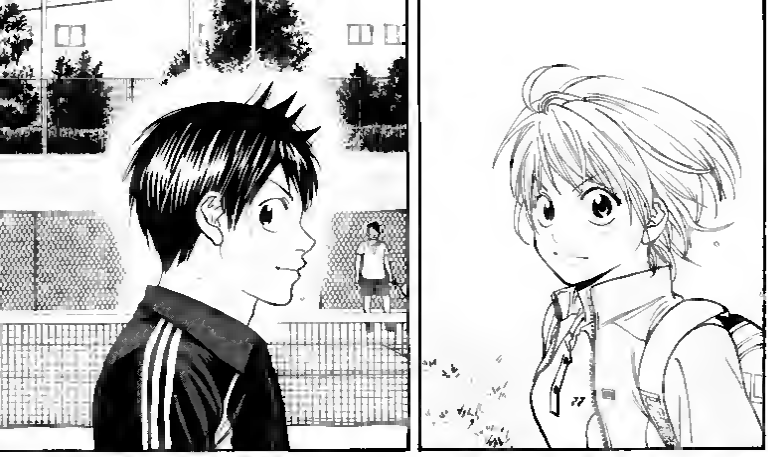
PHEW~
HA!
HA!


A FAST SERVE, THEN A SLICE...
HIS CHANGE OF PACE IS GOING PRETTY WELL.

PASSING THROUGH!


Aa.,,

30 - 15.
KAY!



EI-CHAN'S LEADING THE SECOND SET.
HE JUST MADE HIS FIRST BREAK.
EI-CHAN SEEMS TO BE PLAYING BY HIS STYLE OF HITTING ALL SORTS OF BALLS TO CHANGE THE PACE AND STUFF.
110アン

CONGRATS ON YOUR VICTORY, NACCHAN~
CONGRATS! THAT WAS QUICK.
CONGRATULATIONS!

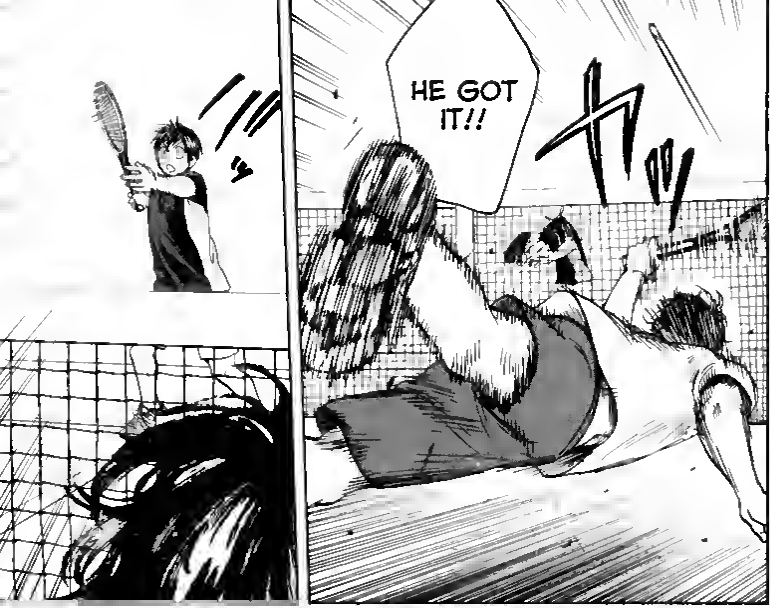
IT'S GETTING HARD TO TELL WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT.
HUH?
Really?

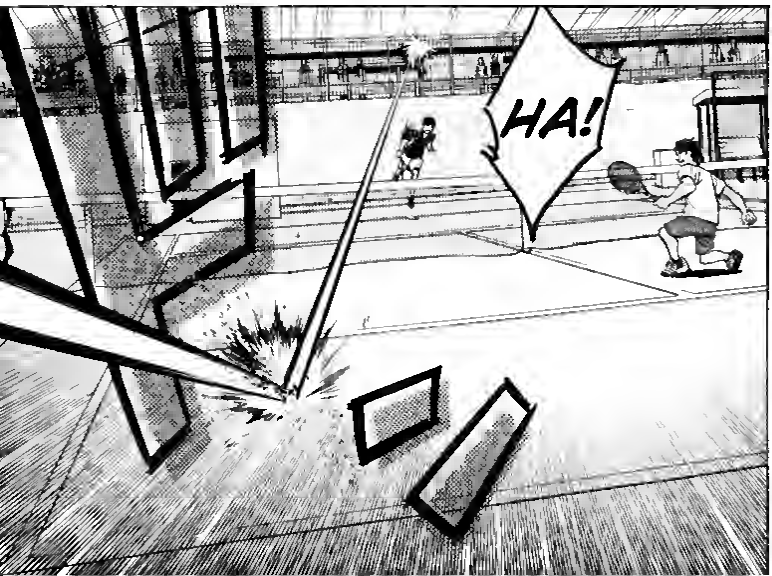
GAME, MARUO. 4 - 1. SECOND SET.
OKAY, KEEP!!

BUT I'M STILL AT JUST ONE BREAK!!
DON

In the following Game 6, Eiichiro takes great risks to shake Araya's serves using change of pace.
In Game 7, Araya tries to slam down Eiichiro's serves using his speed and power.
Both players had strong moments where they seemed like they'll succeed in breaking the opponent's serve, but,
In the end, the match continued on to Game 9 with neither side giving in.
Araya 6 3
Maruo 3 5

DROP SHOT!
SET POINT!! IF I TAKE THIS, WE'LL MOVE ON TO THE FINAL SET...
!
IT'S DANGER-OUS!
HE'S ALREADY ALL THE WAY OVER THERE!!

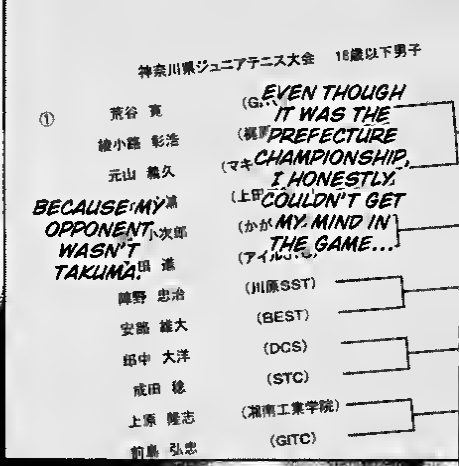

HE GOT IT!!


HA!

オオ..
SECOND SET WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 6 - 3!
YES !!
AMAZING... HE FINALLY TOOK A SET FROM ARAYA!
WASN'T ARAYA TOP 4 IN THE NATIONALS LAST YEAR?
NAH, IT'S JUST ONE SET. IT'S STILL HARD TO TELL.
FOR REAL !!

THE SCORE'S EVEN NOW!!
YEAH! THE ONE WHO GETS THE NEXT SET WINS IT!!
IT'S ALARMING THAT ARAYA'S RESPONSE TIME IS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.
MY MOVEMENTS ARE GETTING BETTER AND BETTER AS I RETURN MORE AND MORE DROP SHOTS...
IT MIGHT BE BECAUSE IT REMINDS ME OF THE MATCHES AGAINST TAKUMA...

I CAN'T BE SAYING THAT IF I THINK ABOUT MY FRIENDS WHO QUIT...

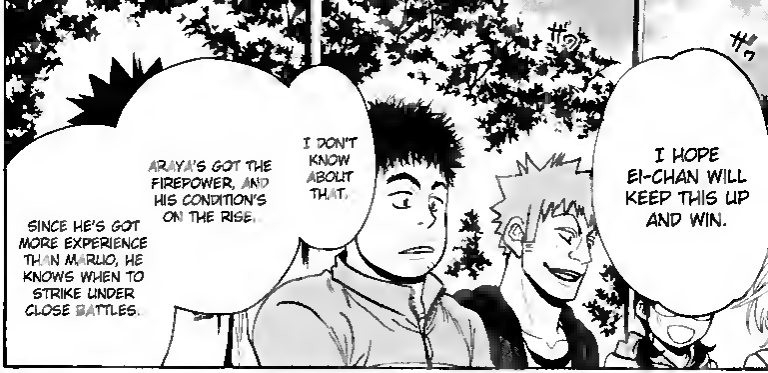

神奈川県ジュニアテニス大会　16歳以下男子
①
荒谷 寛
綾小路 彰浩
元山 義久
BECAUSE MY OPPONENT WASN'T TAKUMA.
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS THE PREFECTURE CHAMPIONSHIP, I HONESTLY COULDN'T GET MY MIND IN THE GAME...
(GJ...
(県...
(マキ...
(上田...
(かが...
(アイル...
(川原SST)
(BEST)
(DCS)
(STC)
(湘南工業学院)
(GITC)

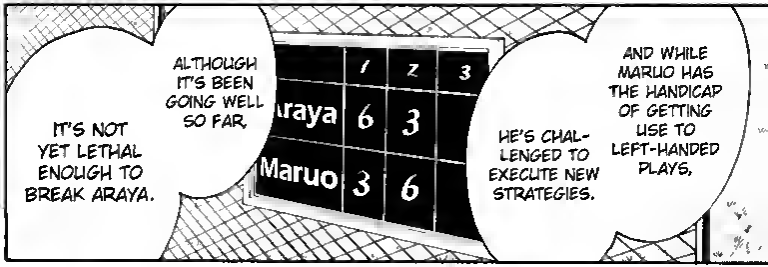
BUT I REMEMBERED...
THE FEELING I HAD WHEN I FIRST STARTED TENNIS.

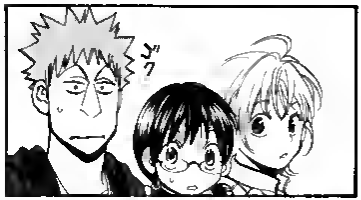
BUT I HONESTLY COULDN'T DO IT...

BY FIGHTING AGAINST YOU.
BY FIGHTING IN THIS CHAMPION-SHIP WITHOUT TAKUMA...

OR FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S SAKE.
IN THE END, I'M NOT TRYING TO WIN FOR HONOR
I JUST CAN'T STAND LOSING!!


I HOPE EI-CHAN WILL KEEP THIS UP AND WIN.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
ARAYA'S GOT THE FIREPOWER, AND HIS CONDITION'S ON THE RISE.
SINCE HE'S GOT MORE EXPERIENCE THAN MARUO, HE KNOWS WHEN TO STRIKE UNDER CLOSE BATTLES.


AND WHILE MARUO HAS THE HANDICAP OF GETTING USE TO LEFT-HANDED PLAYS,
HE'S CHALLENGED TO EXECUTE NEW STRATEGIES.
ALTHOUGH IT'S BEEN GOING WELL SO FAR,
IT'S NOT YET LETHAL ENOUGH TO BREAK ARAYA.
1
2
3
Araya
6
3
Maruo
3
6


ゴク

BUT... I'M SURE HE'LL BE FINE.

REGARDLESS, THE FINAL SET WILL BE A PRETTY TOUGH FIGHT...

カキカキ
カキカキ
カキカキ
ブルブル
ブッ
ブッ
CAUSE EI-CHAN
LOOKS LIKE HE'S HAVING FUN.
ア
ア
ア

TIME!

mangascans.org
MANGA SCANLATION
mangascans
rc.rchighway.net

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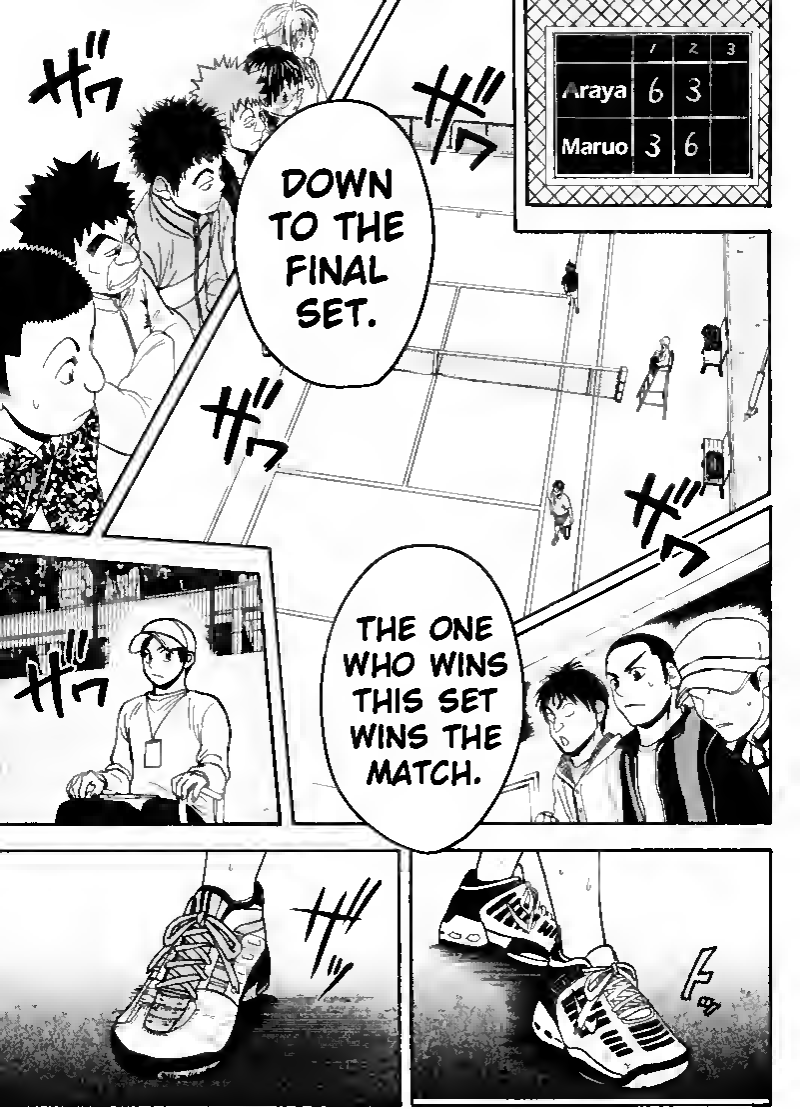
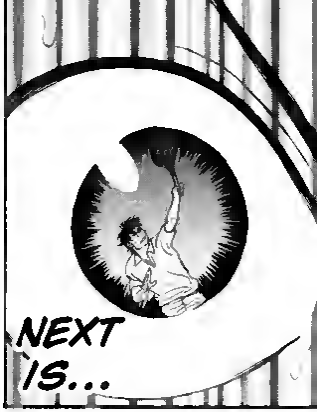

DOWN TO THE FINAL SET.
THE ONE WHO WINS THIS SET WINS THE MATCH.
1 2 3
Araya 6 3
Maruo 3 6

#125: MEMORY

HA!
15-LOVE.
YES!
ARAYA'S GETTING A LOT MORE ACES.
IT MEANS HIS CONDITION'S ON THE RISE.

A WIDE SLICE!!


NEXT IS...

IT'S IN!!

IF I HAVE THE UPPER HAND...

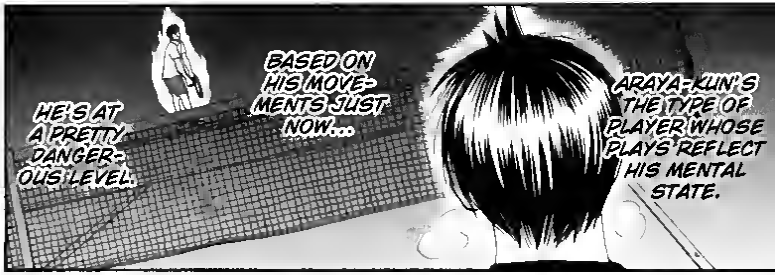
HA!
HIT IT DEEP WITH A FLAT.

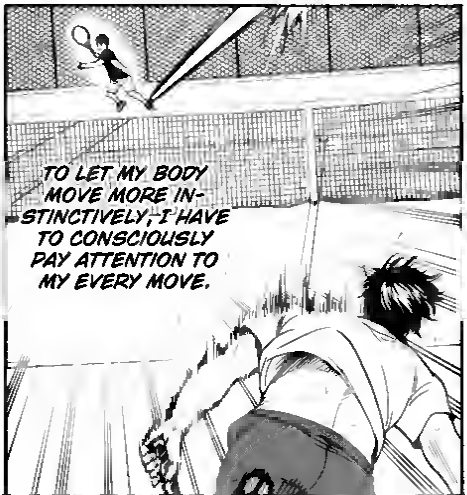
SHALLOW CROSS WITH A SLICE!
HA!
IF ARAYA-KUN'S AT THE NET...
THEN IT'S A LOB!!

30 - LOVE.
HELL YEAH!!
ORA AA!
IT PASSED HIM... WILL IT GO THROUGH?!

EVEN THOUGH HIS POWER AND SPEED ARE ALREADY AT A WHOLE NEW LEVEL...
HIS REACTIONS ARE GETTING FASTER, TOO.

おお
INCREDIBLE!! ARAYA'S IN TOP GEAR!!
A COUNTER AS HE'S GOING OFF BALANCE!!


HE'S AT A PRETTY DANGEROUS LEVEL.
BASED ON HIS MOVEMENTS JUST NOW...
ARAYA-KUN'S THE TYPE OF PLAYER WHOSE PLAYS REFLECT HIS MENTAL STATE.


TO LET MY BODY MOVE MORE INSTINCTIVELY, I HAVE TO CONSCIOUSLY PAY ATTENTION TO MY EVERY MOVE.

BUT I HAVE TO...
STAY COOL AND TRY TO WIDEN MY CHOICE OF ATTACKS EVEN MORE...

HA!
IT MIGHT BE EXACTLY WHAT NACCHAN'S SAYING.
EI-CHAN'S "HAVING FUN," HUH...

YOU KNOW HOW HE TENDS TO WORK TOO HARD AT TIMES, RIGHT?
THERE WAS THIS FIELD DAY IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND...
OKAY, WE DECIDED ON OUR POSITIONS.
SO, GUESS THAT'S HOW IT'LL BE.
...
YEAH, THEN LET'S ALL PRACTICE AFTER SCHOOL EVERY DAY STARTING TODAY.
MARUO EIICHIRO (13)
SORRY, I'LL PASS!
I'VE GOT A CLUB TO GO TO.
I'VE GOT STUFF TO DO, TOO
AH... EVEN IF IT'S JUST AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE FREE.
チーム・コーカーン
YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD. IT'S JUST A STUPID FIELD DAY.
DON'T GET SO SERIOUS ABOUT EVERYTHING.

SINCE IT'S SOCCER, THERE'S NO POINT IF WE DON'T WORK AS A TEAM.
RIGHT? KAGEYAMA!
EH...
C'MON, LET'S JUST HAVE FUN!
WELL, THAT'S THE GOOD PART ABOUT EI-CHAN.
IN THE END, SINCE HE'S NOT THE TYPE TO FORCE THINGS ONTO OTHERS,
HE EVENTUALLY STARTED TO DO THINGS HE CAN DO BY HIMSELF, AT HIS OWN PACE.
YOU KNOW HOW HE TENDS TO BE A BIT DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS
HE FINALLY HAS SOMEONE WHO'LL MATCH HIS HARD WORK WITH THEIR FULL GAME
AND MORE AND MORE AS HE GETS STRONGER AND STRONGER.
SO, I BET HE'S REALLY HAVING FUN RIGHT NOW.

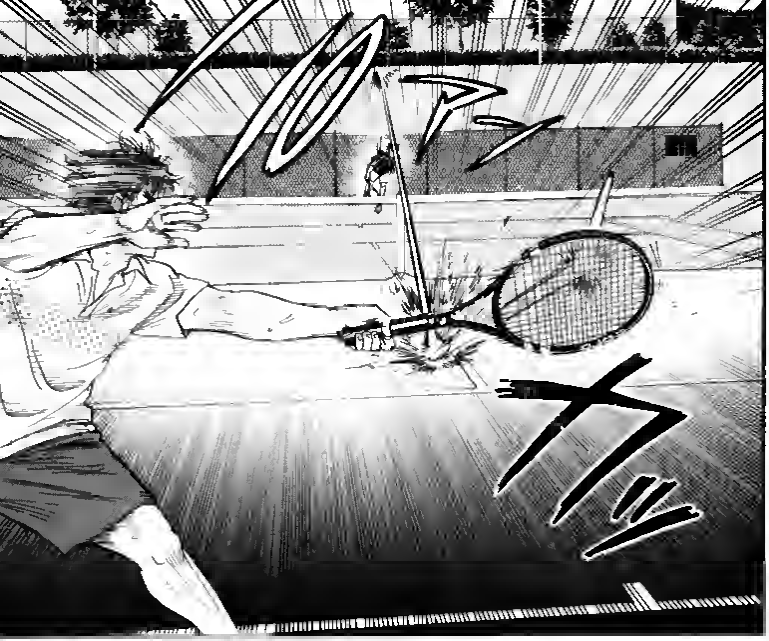
IN TENNIS, HE FINALLY FOUND THE JOY
OF EACH OTHER GIVING THEIR VERY BEST.

ORAA!
GAME, ARAYA. 2 - 1.
GAME, MARUO. 2 - 2.
GAME, ARAYA. 3 - 2.
HA!
1 2 3
Araya 6 3 3
6 3

I CAN TELL AFTER EX-CHANGING THIS MANY SHOTS.
YOU'RE AIMING FOR THE PROS TOO, RIGHT?

I'LL GET TO EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM WITH MY SPEED...
IN THAT CASE, ALL THE MORE REASON I CAN'T LET YOU HAVE THIS...
REGARDLESS OF WHEN YOU CHANGE THE PACE OR WHERE YOU CONTROL YOUR BALLS...
AND SLAM IT BACK WITH MY POWER!!
SLAM

I GOT TO INCREASE MY OPTIONS EVEN MORE.
YEAH !!
40-30.
CONCEN-TRATE, AND...
BUT DON'T RUSH ...
TOPSPIN, SLICE, FLAT, TEMPO, COURSE... THERE'S INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.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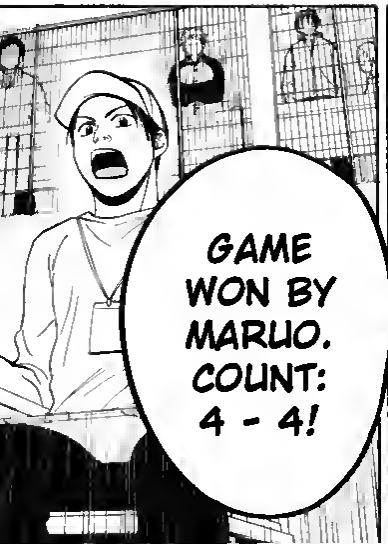
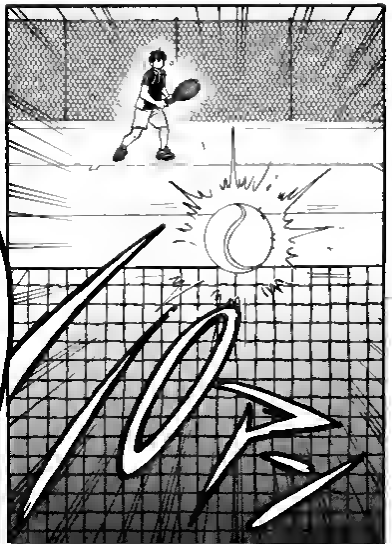

GAME WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 4 - 4!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NOW THE ONE WHO TAKES TWO GAMES IN A ROW FIRST WINS!!
AMAZING... NEITHER SIDE'S BACKING DOWN FOR EVEN A SECOND!!
GO TAKE THE CROWN NO SEEDER!! YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN AFTER COMING THIS FAR!
ARAYA-SAN, DEFINITELY KEEP THIS ONE!!

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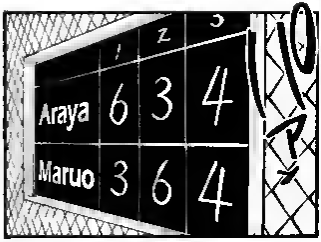
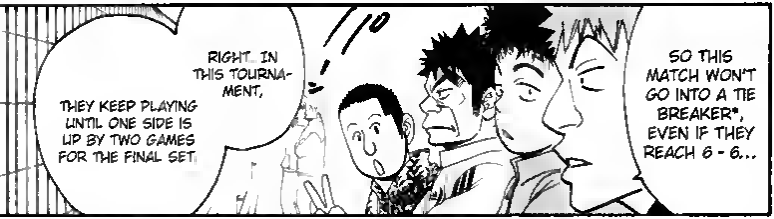
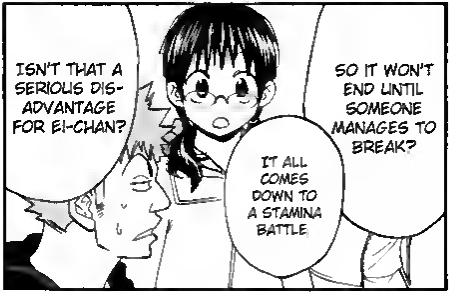
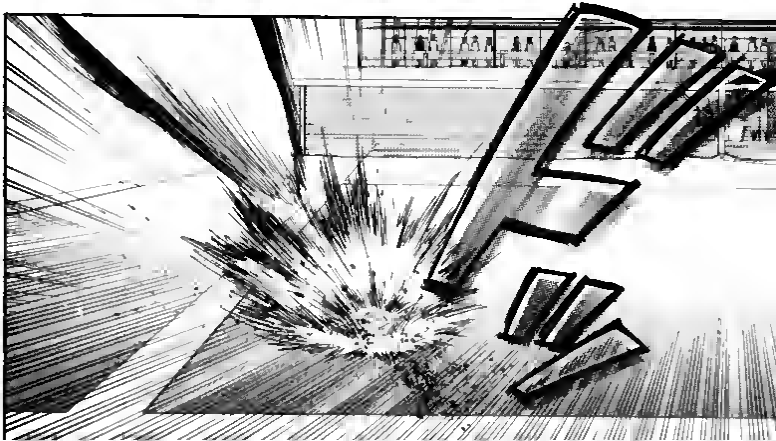



SO THIS MATCH WON'T GO INTO A TIE BREAKER*, EVEN IF THEY REACH 6 - 6...
RIGHT. IN THIS TOURNAMENT,
THEY KEEP PLAYING UNTIL ONE SIDE IS UP BY TWO GAMES FOR THE FINAL SET.

*NOTE Tie Breaker: When a game reaches 6 – 6, the first one to reach 7 points (with a lead of at least two points)


ISN'T THAT A SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE FOR EI-CHAN?
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO A STAMINA BATTLE
SO IT WON'T END UNTIL SOMEONE MANAGES TO BREAK?

HAH!
#126: DECISION



HMPH~
AS EXPECTED, I CAN'T TAKE THE LEAD THAT EASILY IN A RETURN GAME.
IN THAT CASE, IT'S ALL OR NOTHING.
ORAAA!

HA!
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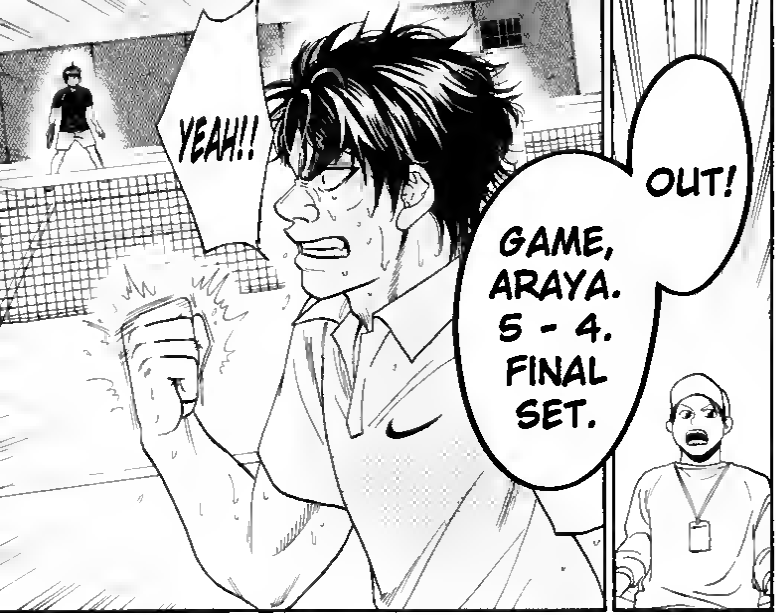
YEAH!!
GAME, ARAYA. 5 - 4. FINAL SET.
OUT!

OKAY, ARAYA-SAN. LET'S FINISH IT WITH THE NEXT SET!!

RGH

IT'S STILL A TIE. KEEP IT NO MATTER WHAT, MARUO!!

OH... WE'RE CHANGING COURTS
はっ
WAIT... WHAT AM I DOING DOZING OFF AT A TIME LIKE THIS!?
I'LL LOSE IF HE BREAKS THE NEXT GAME...
ゴク
ゴク
I'M TAKING IN ENOUGH SUGAR WITH THE DRINKS...
SO I HAVE TO FOCUS AND WORK MY HEAD MORE!!

SINCE I HAVE TO CONSIDER ALL THE DIFFERENT CHOICES OF ATTACK FOR EVERY SINGLE SHOT, I'M USING MY HEAD SEVERAL TIMES MORE THAN I USUALLY DO.
IT'S BEEN OVER TWO HOURS SINCE WE STARTED THE MATCH.
30-15
カキ
カキ
BECAUSE OF THAT, MY HEAD'S WORN OUT WELL BEFORE MY BODY.
...FATIGUE
NO... CALM DOWN.
IT'S A PROBLEM THAT I NEED TO TAKE MORE SERIOUSLY...
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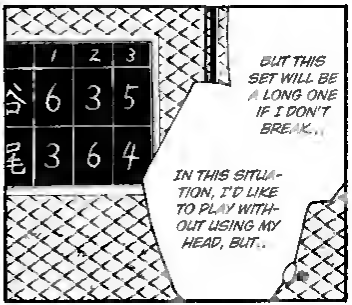
BUT... I FINALLY MANAGED COME THIS FAR...
AGAINST ARAYA-KUN...


1
2
3
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6
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5
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3
6
4
BUT THIS SET WILL BE A LONG ONE IF I DON'T BREAK...
IN THIS SITUATION, I'D LIKE TO PLAY WITHOUT USING MY HEAD, BUT..

I CERTAINLY C.N'T LEAVE MY INSTINCTS TO DO EVERYTHING.
I'M CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF TESTING MANY DIFFERENT ATTACK PATTERNS.
カキカキカキ

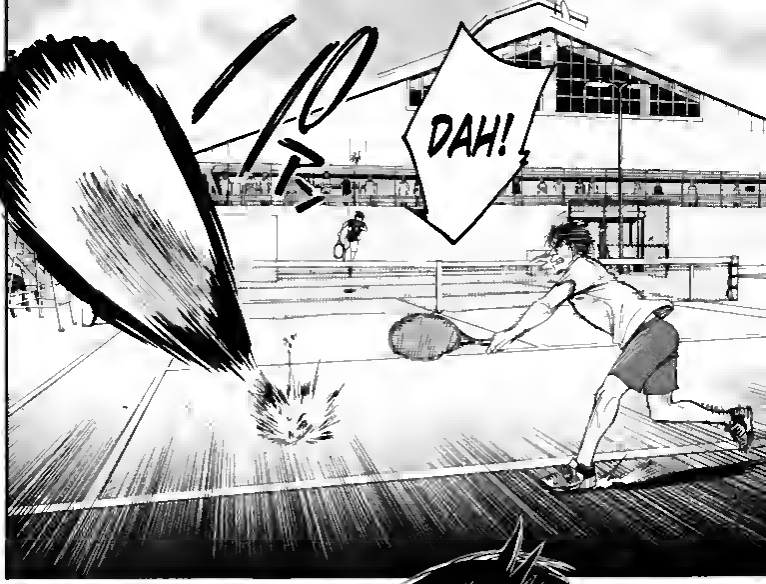
I WILL NEVER ACCEPT THAT, OVER MY DEAD BODY!!
"I LOST BECAUSE I DOZED OFF AT THE END"
...
ギュ～
ヒタ…

TIME!
I HAVE TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT I'M AT A DIS-ADVANTAGE FOR LONG MATCHES.
ANYWAY, ARAYA-KUN'S WEAPON IS HIS PHYSICAL ABILITY.
I HAVE NO OTHER OPTION!!
KEEP THE ONE AFTER, AND WINNING WITH 7 - 5 WILL BE THE FASTEST ROUTE!!
BREAK THE NEXT GAME AT ALL COSTS FOR 6 - 5
THEN, I DO EVERYTHING TO KEEP THIS AND MAKE IT 5 - 5

HA!
HERE I GO!

AWAWA
GO WITH THE ATTACK THAT'LL CRUSH ARAYA-KUN'S TEMPO AND GET ME THE POINT AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE!!
SERVICE DASH!!

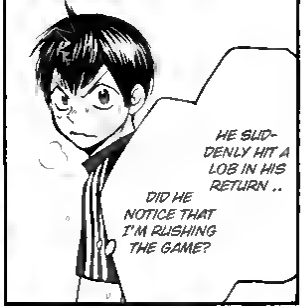
A RETURN WITH A LOB!?
LIKE I'LL OVERLOOK THAT!!
IT'S DEEP...
IF YOU'RE REALLY CLOSE TO YOUR LIMIT, THEN THERE'S NO NEED TO HURRY THE MATCH
BUT IF I WANT TO MAKE THIS QUICK,
FINISH IT IN ONE STROKE...


DAH!

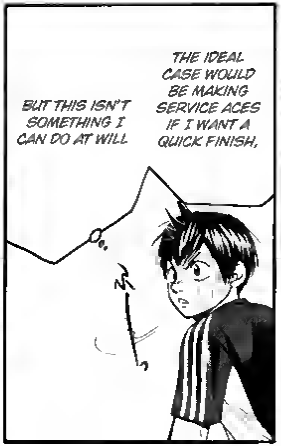
おおっ
OH~!! HE MANAGED TO CONTROL IT WELL EVEN THOUGH IT WAS PRETTY DEEP!!
BUT IF THE LOB WAS ABOUT 30 CM DEEPER, HE'D HAVE BEEN A GONER!!

YES!!

HA!


HE SUDDENLY HIT A LOB IN HIS RETURN ..
DID HE NOTICE THAT I'M RUSHING THE GAME?

HA!
MAKE THE SECOND SERVE DEEP AND STABLE!!


BUT THIS ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN DO AT WILL
THE IDEAL CASE WOULD BE MAKING SERVICE ACES IF I WANT A QUICK FINISH,

FAULT.
SO CLOSE!

BUT IF I TRY TO FORCE MY WAY TO A QUICK FINISH, I'LL LIMIT MY CHOICE OF ATTACK AND IT'LL BE EASIER FOR HIM TO READ MY MOVES.
SO I CAN'T AVOID A RALLY BATTLE,
IN THE END, THE BEST OPTION DURING SERVE GAMES IS TO TAKE MY TIME LIKE I'VE BEEN DOING SO FAR TO SEEK NEW ATTACK PATTERNS.
DEEP SLICE, THEN A LOW ANGLE SLICE ...

HA!
ビッ
30 - LOVE.
TCH!
YES!!
NOW TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE IN BETWEEN POINTS TO REST MY BRAIN

HE KNOW'S THAT I'M TRYING TO DECIDE THE GAME QUICKLY.
I KNEW IT. HE STARTED TO USE A DEFENSIVE STYLE TO GO FOR A DRAWN-OUT MATCH
HA!
BUT IF HE'S LESS LIKELY TO ATTACK AGGRESSIVELY, IT'LL BE EASIER FOR ME TO ATTACK INSTEAD.
30 - 15.
PUT MY BRAIN IN TOP GEAR TO TAKE THIS ONE!!
40 - 30.

HA!
HIT TWO STRONG, DOWN-THE-LINE FLAT SHOTS IN A ROW.
GAME, MARUO. 5 - 5. FINAL SET.

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ザワ
ザワ
EI-CHAN, NICE KEEP.
YES, HE GOT IT!!
I FINALLY GOT IT...!!
NEXT... I'LL BREAK AND WIN, NO MATTER WHAT!!
I HAVE TO DECIDE IT RIGHT HERE AND NOW!!

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STARTING NOW, DON'T CHANGE THE CURRENT STYLE AND TAKE AS MUCH RISK AS POSSIBLE...
ANYWAYS, I HAVE TO WIN AND FINISH THIS WHILE I CAN STILL DO SOMETHING!!

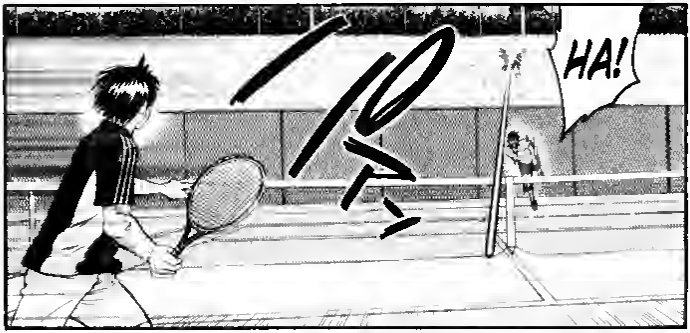
#127 RESOLUTION

TAKE THE RISK, AND...
CENTER!

BULLSEYE!!
HA!
POP!

LOVE - 15.
YES!!
AMAZING!! HE READ THE BALL AND FINISHED IT IN ONE STROKE!!
THAT'S PRETTY FORCEFUL FOR MARUO.
SO HE'S GOING FOR THE FINISH?
THAT'S ALL HE CAN DO, BASICALLY.
HE WENT FOR A RETURN ACE RIGHT FROM THE FIRST SERVE...
IF HE'S CHOOSING SUCH A HIGH-RISK CHANGE-OF-PACE TACTIC... THERE'S NO QUESTION NOW.
YOU'RE RUSHING THE GAME.

I WAS HONESTLY IRRITATED BY YOUR UNPREDICTABLE TENNIS, BUT ..
THERE'S AN INFINITE NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES IN CHANGE-OF-PACE...

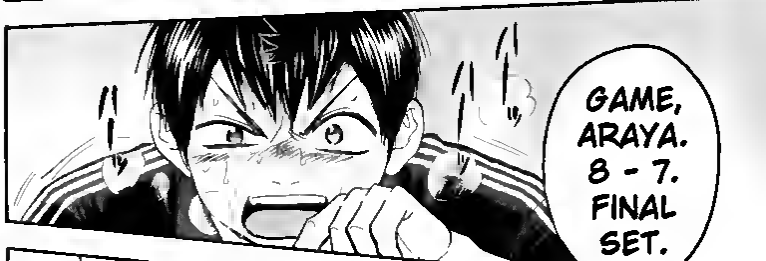

HA!

JUST BY ADDING "HASTE" INTO THE FACTOR...

I CAN INSTANTLY NARROW DOWN YOUR CHOICES!
15 - 15.
-10
-10
トーン

GUH
GAME, ARAYA. 6 - 5. FINAL SET.
PLAYING DEFENSIVE IS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE.
IF THE OPPONENT IS TAKING A GAMBLE TO RUSH THE GAME,
SHOOT .. I FAILED TO BREAK. HE'S SEEING THROUGH ME.
BUT COULDN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING THAT COULD OVERTURN THE SITUATION, SO ..
EIICHIRO WAS FORCED TO RECONSIDER HIS TACTICS,

1/10
1 2 3
6 3 7
3 6 7
THE MATCH PROGRESSED WITH KEEPS LIKE BEFORE,
FURTHER CORNERING EIICHIRO INTO AN EVEN GREATER PREDICAMENT.


GAME, ARAYA. 8 - 7. FINAL SET.

EI-CHAN...
HOW LONG IS THIS GOING TO CONTINUE...
IT'S TURNING OUT TO BE AN INCREDIBLE MATCH.

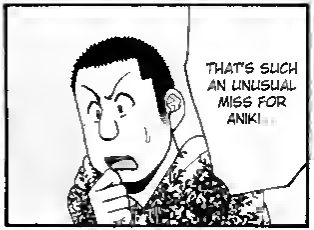
SHOOT... IF I STARE AT ONE PLACE FOR A MOMENT, MY EYES START TO LOSE FOCUS.
IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN DURING THE MATCH, IT'LL DEFINITELY AFFECT MY PERFORMANCE.
ポヤ!
SHOULD I GO FOR AN EVEN GREATER RISK?
I CAN'T DO MUCH ABOUT IT, EVEN IF I'M KEEPING MY GAMES
BUT IF ARAYA-KUN KEEPS ON PLAYING SO DEFENSIVELY,
TIME!
AH IT'S ALREADY TIME

FAULT!

THAT'S TOO MUCH RISK..

!!
DOUBLE FAULT! LOVE - 15.

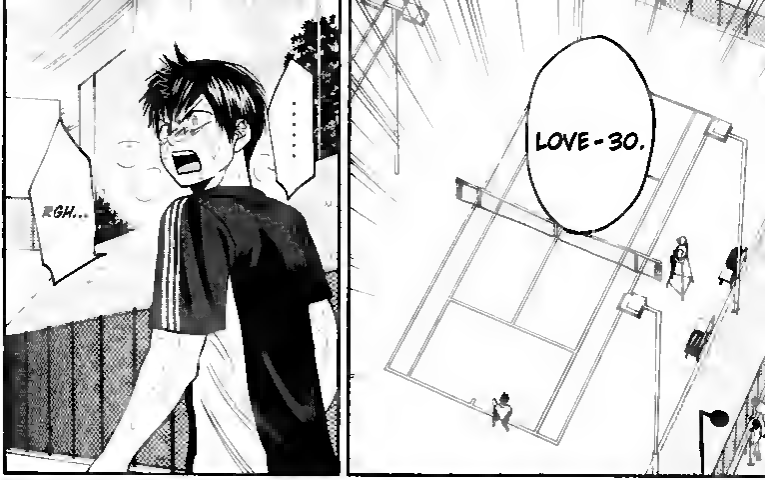
HA!


THAT'S SUCH AN UNUSUAL MISS FOR ANIKI...

ORAA!

STRATEGIES LIKE CHANGE-OF-PACE ARE BASICALLY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE LACKING IN PHYSICAL STRENGTH.
OF COURSE, STRATEGY WAS IMPORTANT IN TENNIS BACK IN THE DAY.
BUT THE HUMAN BODY IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING WHILE THE COURT REMAINS UNCHANGED IN SIZE.
SO, THE COURT EVENTUALLY GOT TOO SMALL TO USE STRATEGY AS A WEAPON.
THE REASON YOU'RE FALLING BEHIND...
IS BECAUSE YOU CAN'T KEEP MOVING FAST AND KEEP HITTING STRONG!
AND AS MODERN RACKETS IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY...
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING BECAME UNYIELDING POWER AND SPEED THAT WOULD LAST TILL THE END OF THE MATCH.

DICTATES THE DIFFERENCE IN STRENGTH!!
IN OTHER WORDS, THE DIFFERENCE IN PHYSICAL ABILITY...
FLOP
OOF


.....
RGH...
LOVE - 30.

IF I LOSE THIS, IT'S LOVE - 40...
THREE MATCH POINTS IN A ROW.
LOVE - 30

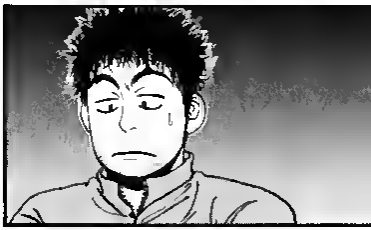
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
CRAP...
MY BRAIN'S NOT FUNCTION-ING AT A TIME I NEED IT THE MOST...

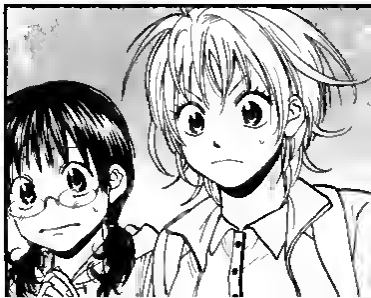
HE'LL DEFINITELY LOWER THE STAKES FOR THIS...
15 - 30.
HUH?
WASN'T THAT... REALLY FAST?
YEAH.

I SEE...

I DON'T NEED TO THINK...
TO HIT SERVES...

.....





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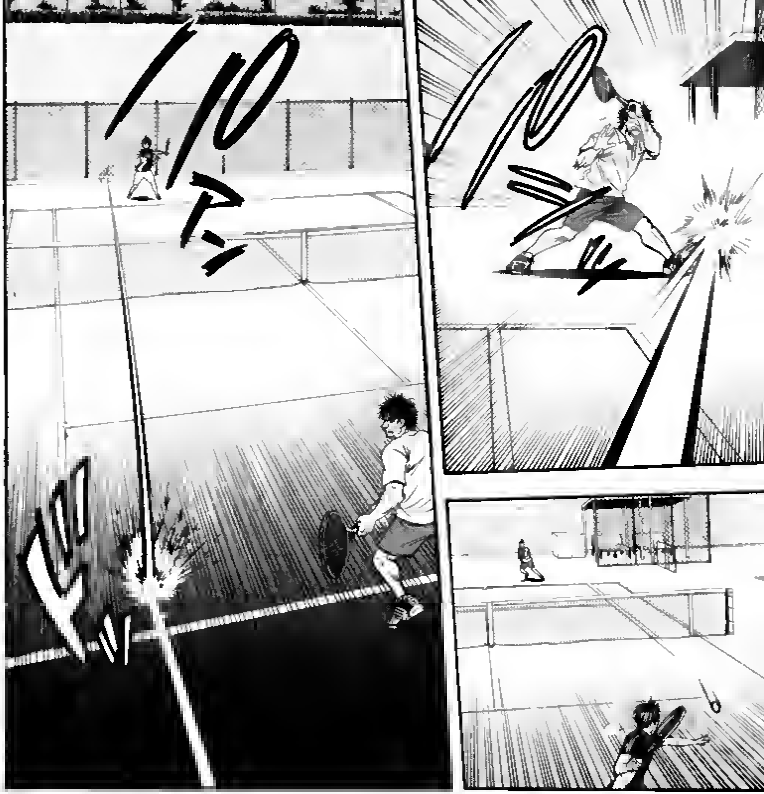
HA!
#128: STOP


30 - 30.

HE PRETTY MUCH GOT TWO POINTS IN A ROW WITH JUST HIS SERVES.
AGAIN. . NOW A FINISHER RIGHT AFTER AN AMAZING SERVE...
OH!?
THIS IS PRETTY BIG HIM CATCHING UP WITHOUT GIVING A MATCH POINT..
ザワ..
ザワ..
ザワ..
NO WAY... THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, RIGHT?
MARUO STILL HAD THAT MUCH LEFT IN HIM?

IS BECAUSE WHATEVER MY MIND CAN'T PROCESS, DUE TO FATIGUE,
IT'S GOING WELL...
THE REASON I'M SUDDENLY ABLE TO MOVE THE WAY I WANT...
IS BEING COVERED BY MY INSTINCTS?

HA!
!
SERVICE DASH!!

HEY! HE DID IT AGAIN. IS MARUO COMPLETELY BACK IN SHAPE?
40 - 30.
NO...
AMAZING...!! AT THIS RATE, HE MIGHT JUST GO FOR A BREAK ON THE NEXT ONE.
OVERWHELMING FATIGUE AND PRESSURE IS MIRACULOUSLY KEEPING UP THE BALANCE BETWEEN REASON AND INSTINCT...
INSTINCT
REASON
HE'S IN A STATE WHERE HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO LEAVE IT TO INSTINCT BECAUSE FATIGUE HAS CAUSED HIS MIND TO STOP FUNCTIONING.

...IF THAT'S THE CASE, THIS STATE WON'T LAST VERY LONG.
HE SWITCHED TO SIMPLE BUT HIGH-RISK AT-TACKS,
FROM ATTACKS THAT TRY TO BREAK MY PACE,
DYING STRUGGLES CAN'T BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.
I'VE SEEN COUNTLESS GUYS THAT CHANGE THEIR STYLES AFTER FACING A LOSS.
THIS IS WHERE WE'LL DECIDE THE MATCH!
THIS IS IT...

HIT THIS WITH A FOREHAND ...
ORAA!
TO HIS BACK-HAND SIDE!!

IT'S WEAK!
!!
SHOOT...
IT'S BECAUSE MY INSTINCTS ARE STILL NOT USED TO RETURNING HIS FOREHAND CROSS WITH A BACKHAND...
I KNEW IT. YOU ALWAYS SEEMED TO HAVE TROUBLE RETURNING THIS ONE...
THEN

ORAA!
HE'S AIMING WITH HIS FOREHAND!!

AS EXPECTED, HE'S QUICK AT COUNTERING
OH~!! ARAYA'S STRIKING BACK THIS TIME!!
ズゴッ!!
OUT, DEUCE.
YES!!
IT'LL BE TOUGH IF HE KEEPS THAT UP
THINGS WERE JUST STARTING TO GO PRETTY WELL.
CRAP... I HAVE TO USE MY HEAD WHEN A FOREHAND CROSS IS COMING TO MY BACKHAND
SO I HIT TO HIS BACKHAND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...
IF SO, I HAVE TO PREVENT ARAYA-KUN FROM USING HIS FOREHAND,
WHAT SHOULD I DO..
I'D LIKE TO DO AS LITTLE THINKING AS POSSIBLE IN MY CURRENT FATIGUED CONDITION.

HA!
THIS IS ALL I CAN DO NOW...
TO HIS BACK-HAND!

HE FORCED HIMSELF TO A FOREHAND!!
CRAP.. YOU RETURN LEFT-HANDED FOREHANDS
AT ONE TEMPO FASTER .

STOP!!
RGH
ガシャ
ADVANTAGE, ARAYA!!
HELL YEAH!!

WHAT WAS... THAT... MY BODY SUDDENLY GOT REALLY HEAVY.
IT'S HERE!! MATCH POINT!
IN OTHER WORDS, THAT MIRACULOUS STATE YOU'RE IN WILL FALL APART.
IF YOUR INSTINCT REACTS STRONGLY TO FATIGUE OVER PRESSURE, IT'LL PRIORITIZE RESTING YOUR BODY OVER ANYTHING ELSE.
GO EI-CHAN GO!
LET'S FINISH THIS ARAYA!

RGH...
BUT... I CAN STILL MOVE MY BODY...
FAULT!
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#129: WINNER
HE'S SETTING HIMSELF UP!!
A LEFT-HANDED FOREHAND SHOT TO MY BACKHAND!!

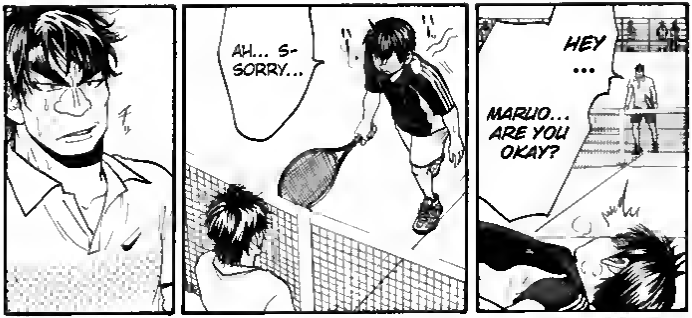
110
アン

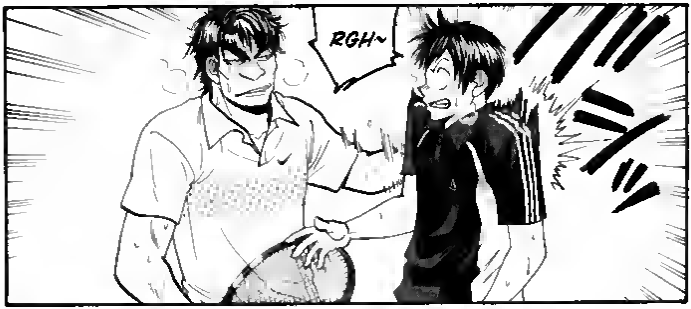
TCH!

タ。

GAME, SET, AND MATCH
WON BY ARAYA. COUNT: 6 – 3, 3 – 6, 9 – 7!!

IT'S OVER ALREADY...?
HUH...


AH... S-SORRY...
HEY ...
MARUO... ARE YOU OKAY?


RGH~

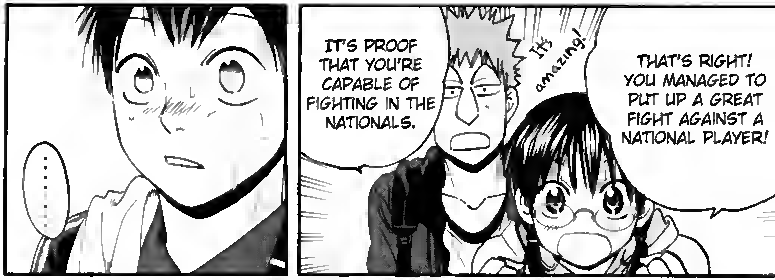
SEEMS YOU'RE NO LONGER SOME UN-KNOWN PLAYER.
TAKE A LOOK AROUND.

NO WAY, TODAY'S STAR IS MARUO!!
ARAYA'S THE BEST!!
WOOOOW!! IT WAS SPEC-TACULAR!!
BOTH OF YOU GO TO THE NATIONALS!!
AMAZING!! WHAT A GREAT MATCH!!
prince

GOOD WORK, EI-CHAN!!
CONGRATU-LATIONS, ARAYA-SAN!!
YOU FINALLY DID IT, ARAYA!!
AH... SO IT'S REALLY OVER.

HUH...
YOU DID WELL!
Good work, Eri-chan~
I THINK CHANGE-OF-PACE WAS THE RIGHT STRATEGY AGAINST THAT BRUTE FORCE.
YOU DID REAL WELL EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU COULD PULL OFF IN A DAY OR TWO.
THE LOSS HURTS IF YOU THINK OF KANTO,
BUT IT'S A HUGE GAIN THAT WE'VE FOUND A CLEAR GOAL.
I SAW YOUR MATCH AGAINST ARAYA-KUN HALF A YEAR AGO.
LISTEN, MARUO-KUN.
YES...

IT'S UNTHINKABLE THAT YOU MANAGED TO SHORTEN THAT HUGE GAP YOU HAD BACK THEN DOWN TO THIS.
EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN'T BE THE CHAMPION, THE ONE WHO GREW MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN KANAGAWA DURING THIS PAST YEAR IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, YOU.


THAT'S RIGHT! YOU MANAGED TO PUT UP A GREAT FIGHT AGAINST A NATIONAL PLAYER!
It's amazing!
IT'S PROOF THAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF FIGHTING IN THE NATIONALS.
.....

CAN I HAVE A MINUTE?
HMM?
HUH?

IT'S THE PREFECTURE FINAL, AND I FIGURED IT'D BE GOOD TO SKETCH OUTSIDE FROM TIME TO TIME.
YOU CAME TO WATCH?
HI.
IWASA-KUN...?
I WAS PLANNING TO LEAVE AFTER TAKING A FEW PICTURES.
BUT I WANTED TO TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID BEFORE AFTER WATCHING YOU PLAY
?
BUT I WAS WRONG.
HUH?
MARUO-KUN WHY DO YOU PLAY TENNIS?
HALF YEAR AGO, WHEN I WAS TALKING TO YOU AFTER THE MATCH,
I SAID "ENJOYING ISN'T ENOUGH TO BEAT ARAYA."
...BECAUSE, I ENJOY IT.
THAT WON'T BE ENOUGH AGAINST ARAYA.
!?

WHEN YOU'RE GOING FOR SOMETHING WITH YOUR FUTURE AT STAKE,
THERE ISN'T A STRONGER DRIVING FORCE THAN THE FEELING OF "JOY."

I REALIZED TOO AFTER DEDICATING MYSELF TO THE THING I REALLY LOVE.
Sketch Book

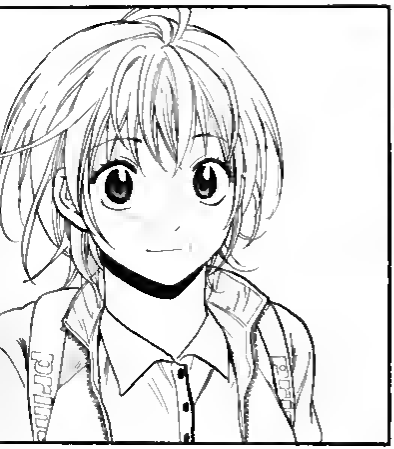
AS YOU HIT A WALL OVER AND OVER,
YOU DO YOUR BEST TO TRY TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION.
THE SIGHT OF YOU TACKLING THE CHALLENGE OVER AND OVER

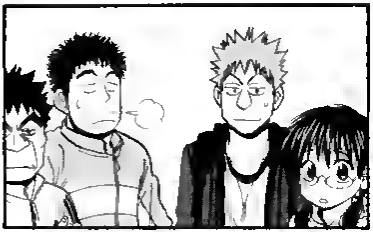
MADE ME SEE THAT YOU'RE ENJOYING THE MATCH MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.

I BELIEVE THE REASON YOU WERE ABLE TO FIGHT ARAYA LIKE THAT
WAS BECAUSE YOU'RE ENJOYING TENNIS MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE.

ポロポロ
ポロ
...THANK YOU SO MUCH...
BUT IT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH...
NO MATTER HOW MUCH FUN I'M HAVING...
GETTING STRONG ...
ISN'T ENOUGH.
prince

I NEED TO WIN...





THEN, WE'LL BEGIN THE AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE KANAGAWA PREFECTURE JUNIOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT.
ALL THOSE RECEIVING AWARDS, PLEASE GATHER IN COURT 1.
COME ON, STOP CRYING! YOU HAVE THE AWARD CEREMONY.
JUST BE PROUD OF TODAY! OKAY?
Y-YES ...

Kanagawa Prefecture Junior Tennis Tournament Results

Women's 18 and under

1st Place	Takagaki Natsu (STC)
Runner-up	Sakurai Rei (Umeda TC)
Top 4	Kousaka Akiko (STC)
	Hasegawa Asako (Miyagawa T.A.)

Men's 18 and under

1st Place	Araya Hiroshi(GITC)
Runner-up	Maruo Eiichiro (STC)
Top 4	Mogami Norihiko (Shounan Industry Academy)
	Inoue Kiichi (Minamikawa TC)

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Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

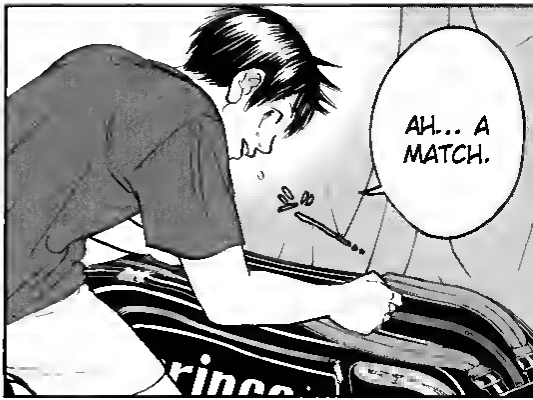
RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggia
Proofreader: Galaaza
Cleaner: Stark
Typesetter: Busaway
Q-Checker: Galaaza

It's been two days since the finals of Kanagawa Prefecture Junior Tennis Tournament.
#130 CHANGING MENTALITY

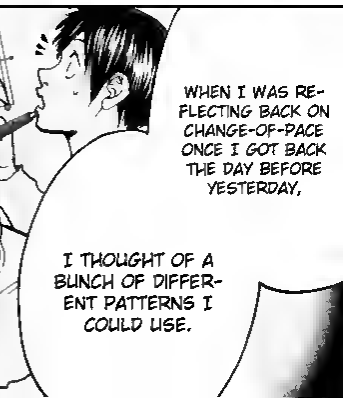
On my first day back from a break, I...
My, Mariio-kun. You're early today
Aa...
Good morning!
was feeling a bit restless.

キョロ
キョロ
AH...WELL, I'M RETURNING FROM A BREAK AND I'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO,
SO I WAS WONDERING IF THERE'S SOMEONE WHO CAN PLAY WITH ME...
PLAY WITH YOU? RALLIES? OR PRACTICE SHOTS?

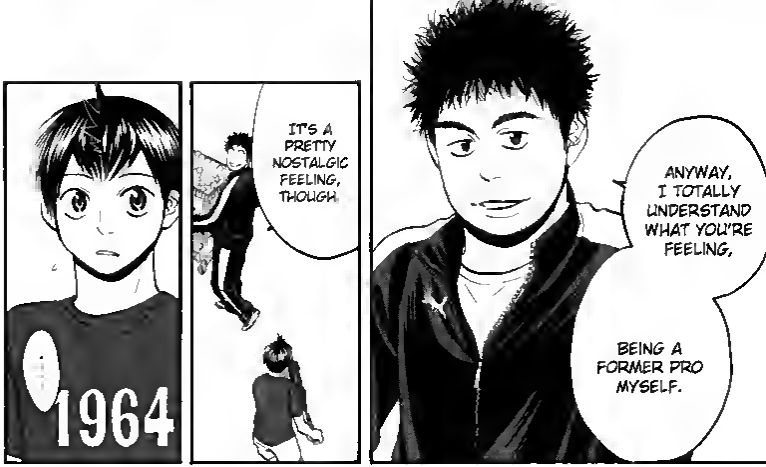
HUH?
HEY, YOU'RE OVER AN HOUR EARLY TODAY.


AH... A MATCH.

THEN I COULDN'T WAIT TO TEST THEM OUT TO SEE IF I COULD ACTUALLY USE THEM IN A REAL MATCH...
AND I WANTED TO PRACTICE THEM IF I COULD...
カキカキカキカキカキカキカキ


WHEN I WAS REFLECTING BACK ON CHANGE-OF-PACE ONCE I GOT BACK THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY,
I THOUGHT OF A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT PATTERNS I COULD USE.

EVEN THOUGH I WAS SO TIRED FROM LOSING THAT DAY,
I JUST COULDN'T STAY IDLE, AND REALLY WANTED TO PLAY A MATCH SOON..
...THAT'S MATCH ADDICTION...
ADDICTION?
ALTHOUGH CLOSE MATCHES LIKE THE ONE YOU HAD IN THE FINAL CAN BE TOUGH AND SCARY,
IT CAN GIVE YOU A THRILL YOU CAN'T EXPERIENCE ANYWHERE ELSE.
IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR PEOPLE TO GET ADDICTED TO IT.
YOU KNOW HOW THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO'RE INTO EXTREME HIKING OR INTENSE MARATHONS, RIGHT?
THERE ARE QUITE A LOT OF THOSE IN SPORTS
IT'S NOT THE SAME AS GETTING ADDICTED TO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.
HMM... I SEE.


1964
IT'S A PRETTY NOSTALGIC FEELING, THOUGH.
ANYWAY, I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE FEELING,
BEING A FORMER PRO MYSELF.

ARE YOU TELLING ME I'LL LOSE CAUSE OF MY INJURIES?
NO.. BUT ARE YOUR INJURIES OKAY..?
SINCE THERE'S NO ONE ELSE, IT CAN'T BE HELPED I'LL BE YOUR OP-PONENT
NO, NO, NO NOT AT ALL IT'S JUST THAT..
WHAT, YOU GOT A PROBLEM?
EH?! AOI-SAN?!

Y-YES!
JUST GO WARM UP ALREADY!
IF IT'S JUST FOR AN HOUR, I'LL BE FINE

YOU TRULY START TO MASTER CHANGE-OF-PACE ONLY AFTER YOU GET THE CHANCE TO HIT A WIDE VARIETY OF SHOTS.
THERE'S ALSO LEFT-HANDER COUNTER-MEASURES, TOO. NOT TO MENTION HE'S LACKING TOO MUCH MATCH EXPERIENCE.
BUT.. IF I THINK ABOUT HIS FUTURE, PLAYING WITH ME ALONE WON'T BE ENOUGH.
HMM.. IT'S LIKE WATCHING MY OLD SELF.
HA
HA
I'VE GOTTA DO SOME-THING ABOUT THAT PART...
WELL THEN, HERE I GO SIR!
SURE.
I'M NOT BACKING DOWN JUST YET IF IT'S A ONE SET MATCH.
CRAP... H-HE REALLY IS A FORMER PRO.
1964

11:00
CASIO
うと
AS I IMAGINED, AOI-SAN'S REALLY STRONG...
I PLAYED A LOT TODAY, TOO...
ビッ
ビッビッ
ドッ
ドッ

...THAT'S MATCH ADDICTION...
ドキ
ドキ
IN THE END, I GOT SECOND PLACE...
HMM. YOU'RE SECOND BEST IN THE PRE-FECTURE!
I'VE NEVER GOT A SINGLE MEDAL IN MY LIFE, YOU KNOW
BUT IF IT'S JUST RUNNER-UP IN THE PRE-FECTURE, THERE'S NO CHANCE AT WINNING THE NATIONALS.
HEY, DON'T SAY THAT
He's working hard.
SO I'M ASKING YOU, PLEASE!
PLEASE LET ME HAVE ONE YEAR OF JUST TENNIS!

"IF I CAN'T WIN THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR, I'LL GIVE UP ON BECOMING A PRO."

I FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW DEVASTATING THAT ABSENCE WOULD BE FOR ME, WHO STARTED TENNIS AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN.
IF I WERE TO LOSE AND GO FOR COLLEGE EXAMS, I'D BE OUT FOR OVER HALF A YEAR...

MARUO
HEY ...
ARE YOU OKAY?
BUT WHAT IF I LOSE IN THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR...
AS I THOUGHT, THE BEST SCENARIO IS TO WIN...
CAN I REALLY GIVE UP ON BECOMING A PRO?
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE THAT RIGHT NOW.
THERE'S ALSO A POSSIBILITY OF JOINING A CORPORATE TEAM AFTER COLLEGE, BUT...

CONGRATULATIONS ON MOVING UP A YEAR! YOU ARE ALL HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS NOW.
THE COLLEGE EXAMS OR EMPLOYMENT ARE FINALLY COMING UP.
ONE YEAR FROM NOW, YOU'LL BE WALKING DOWN YOUR VARIOUS CHOSEN PATHS.
PEOPLE ARE PREDICTING FUTURE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS TO BE EXTREMELY TOUGH.
HOW YOU'LL LIVE IN THAT WORLD WILL ALL DEPEND ON HOW YOU SPEND THIS LAST YEAR OF...
ガヴ
ガヴ
ガヴ

I DECIDED TO JOIN THE CRAM SCHOOL NEAR THE STATION
I HEARD IT'S PRETTY GOOD.
I WENT TO THE OPEN CAMPUS DURING SPRING BREAK, BUT IT WASN'T MY THING.
GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GET SERIOUS ONCE MY EXTRACURRICULARS ARE OVER.
IT'S TOO LATE WITH YOUR BRAINS!
LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S SWITCHING THEIR GEARS FOR ENTRANCE EXAMS...
IT FEELS LIKE I'M WORKING AGAINST THE TREND WITH FULL FORCE...
EI-CHAN, LET'S GO~
SURE.
AH, THERE YOU ARE!

EI-CHAN'S IN CLASS 2, HUH.
NACCHAN'S CLASS 4, RIGHT?
YUP... AND HIME-CHAN'S CLASS 3 AND KAGEYAMA-KUN IS CLASS 6 CAUSE HE'S INTO SCIENCES.
WE'RE ALL SEPARATED, HUH.
YEAH.

AND EVERYONE SUDDENLY STARTED TALKING ABOUT EXAMS AFTER BECOMING 3RD YEARS.
IT FEELS A BIT ISOLATED.
WAH!
IT WAS THE SAME DURING FIELD TRIPS, TOO.
...HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING? EI-CHAN.
HUH? YEAH, I'M LISTENING!
THAT'S RIGHT... EVEN IF I WERE TO GIVE UP ON BECOMING PRO...

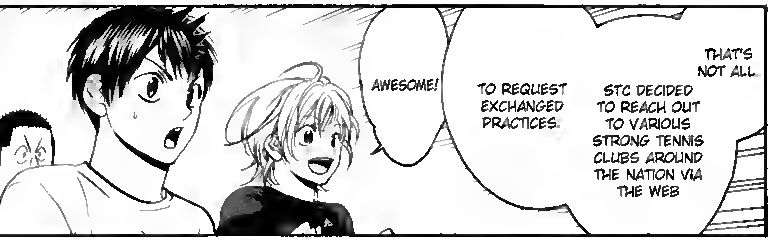
?
COULD I STILL REMAIN BY NACCHAN'S SIDE?
I GOT IT, I GOT IT!
LOOK!
HA!
WOW YOUR HAND-EYE COORDINATION'S GREAT!

OKAY, GATHER 'ROUND!
ピー
WE'RE GONNA TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT TODAY.
IT'LL BE PRETTY MATCH-ORIENTED, SO MAKE SURE YOU EACH KEEP A CLEAR GOAL IN MIND
SOMETHING DIFFERENT?
MATCH-ORIENTED?
Miami Ohio

HI THERE !!
OH... THEY'RE HERE.
HUH?
CO~MING THROUGH!!

HUH?!
OHHH?!
MIYAGAWA-KUN AND MOGAMI-KUN, TOO!
A-ARAYA-KUN.
YO.
EH...WHY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
HUH...? EVEN IWASA-KUN'S HERE?!

IF YOU GUYS DO WELL IN KANTO OR NATIONALS, WE'D BE ALLOCATED A LOT MORE SPOTS FOR THEM, TOO
EH... THEN, WE'LL BE PRACTICING WITH PLAYERS FROM OTHER CLUBS FROM NOW ON?
THERE WAS A MEETING AMONG KANAGAWA'S TENNIS CLUBS RECENTLY,
AND WE DECIDED TO HAVE A LOT MORE INTER-CLUB PRACTICES BETWEEN PLAYERS STARTING THIS YEAR TO STRENGTHEN OUR JUNIOR PLAYERS


AWESOME!
TO REQUEST EXCHANGED PRACTICES.
STC DECIDED TO REACH OUT TO VARIOUS STRONG TENNIS CLUBS AROUND THE NATION VIA THE WEB
THAT'S NOT ALL.

NAH, I CALLED HIM PERSONALLY.
THEN, IWASA-KUN IS...

HE'LL DEFINITELY BE A GREAT MODEL FOR YOUR CHANGE-OF-PACE.
I'VE GOT A LOT OF FREE TIME AFTER FAILING TO GET INTO ART SCHOOL.
UNDER THE CONDITION THAT I'LL GET TO DO SKETCHES DURING FREE TIME.
INCREDIBLE...
IF I GET TO DO THIS FREQUENTLY..
OF COURSE, THERE'LL BE TIMES WHEN THE STC WILL BE VISITING OTHER CLUBS, TOO
AOI-SAN...
I'LL GET TO PLAY A LOT OF MATCHES!!

SORRY WE'RE LATE.
ALSO, THERE SHOULD BE ONE MORE GIRL COMING...
COME ON, YOU SHOULD SAY YOUR GREETINGS TOO
WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO COME TO TOKYO, SO IT WAS PERFECT TIMING.
THANK YOU FOR MAKING SUCH A LONG TRIP.
NO, NO. WE'RE THE ONES WHO'RE GRATEFUL
AH!
WOAH WOAH...
MY HAIR GOT CAUGHT...!

AKI-CHAN!
AH.. IT'S NACCHAN'S RIVAL.. SHIMIZU-SAN..
Japan's no 1 female player

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Baby Steps

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RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggia
Proofreader: Galaaza
Cleaner: Stark
Typesetter: Busaway
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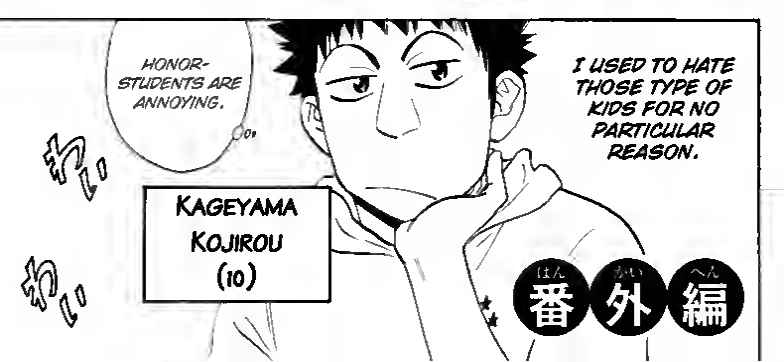
HE WAS JUST AN HONOR STUDENT, A TEACHER'S PET WHO GETS ALL A'S.
WELL, SINCE WE DECIDED ON THE TEAMS FOR NEXT WEEK'S FIELD DAY...
5-3
HE WASN'T SUPER GOOD AT SPORTS, NOR DID HE HAVE ANY SPECIAL CHARISMA THAT DREW PEOPLE IN.

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

球技大会
男子
サッカー
バスケ
I DON'T KNOW WHO CAME UP WITH IT, BUT HIS NICKNAME WAS ALL A'S "EI-CHAN."
PLEASE HOLD STRATEGY MEETINGS WITH YOUR TEAMMATES
MARUO EIICHIRO (10)



番外編

元気にあい
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ザワ
ザワ
ザワ
SOCCER TEAM, GATHER 'ROUND~!!
I HATE BASKET-BALL~
WHAT SHOULD WE DO~
LET'S LEAVE ALL TO MIT-CHAN~

GOT IT?! WE CAN'T LOSE TO CLASS 2 NO MATTER WHAT!!
WHY'S YAGI SO INTO IT?
APPAR-ENTLY CLASS 2'S HARADA ALSO LIKES HAYASHI-SAN.
SO HE'S GOT A RIVAL.
Wow!
Heehee~

THIS IS A PRETTY WEAK TEAM
ALL THE TALL GUYS WENT TO BASKET-BALL.

GOALKEEPER SHOULD BE THE TALLEST ONE HERE, SO TOYONAGA.
WE'LL GO WITH THE DREAM TEAM FOR VICTORY!
SO FORWARDS ARE ME, YAMANISHI, AND UEDA
MIDDLE FIELDERS ARE YAMAMOTO, KAWASAKI, AND SHIJOU.

YOU FOUR ARE DEFENSE.
STUDIO
WELL, OKAY THEN.
SO WE'RE PRETTY MUCH THE USELESS ONES
WELL, SOCCER'S PRETTY MUCH ALL ABOUT FORWARDS... AND I DON'T WANNA STAND OUT, SO I'VE GOT NO COMPLAINTS.
I don't know much about soccer, but who cares~
DEFENSE, HUH...
OKAY, GOT IT!
I'LL DO MY BEST ON DEFENSE!!
Boredw
THIS GUY... DOESN'T HE REALIZE THEY JUST STUCK HIM IN THE POSITION NOBODY WANTS?
TUDIO

LET'S JUST DO WHAT-EVER.
DON'T YOU GUYS DRAG US DOWN!!
WE'LL WIN NO MATTER WHAT!!
IS HE THAT DESPERATE TO TRY AND GET THE GUYS TO LIKE HIM...

HA!
HO!

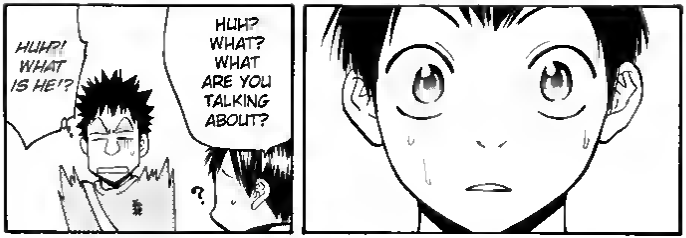
THREE DAYS LATER

WHAT'S HE DOING ALONE?
NO WAY... PRACTICING?
OOPS...
MARUO ...?
ボン
Kageyama-kun! Kageyama-ku~n!!
AH...
HMM...
THIS IS GONNA BE A PAIN IN THE ASS...
PERFECT TIMING!! I JUST LEARNED SOMETHING INCREDIBLE!
H-HEY...

SUCH A HUGE... SOCCER BOOK.
All you need to know about Soccer
~You can learn everything you need to know with this one book~
YOU KNOW, I READ IT IN THIS BOOK, BUT...
IT SAYS EXPERIENCE IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR DEFENDERS THAN TECHNIQUE!
Look!
...
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING...
...SO?
IT'S IMPORTANT GAIN EXPERIENCE WITH 1-ON-1 PRACTICES TO GET USED TO ALL OF THEM!
THOSE WHO FORCE THEIR WAY IN WITH DRIBBLING, OR THOSE WHO GO FOR A CROSS PASS,
SINCE THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT PLAYERS LIKE

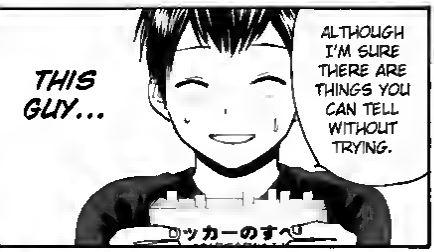
ARE YOU ASKING ME TO PRACTICE TOGETHER?
NOD
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET SUPER GOOD!
WE CAN PRACTICE IF THERE'S TWO PEOPLE.
NOT REALLY...
BUT WHY WOULD YOU PRACTICE FOR A STUPID FIELD DAY?
D- DO YOU HATE SOCCER BY ANY CHANCE?
SORRY... I DON'T FEEL LIKE GOING THAT FAR, SO SEE YA.
STUPID!
AH, WAIT A SEC...
NOT REALLY...
AND PRACTICING FOR A FEW DAYS WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING
DON'T YOU WANNA WIN?
IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT?!
HOW DO YOU KNOW DEFENSE IS BORING?!
I DON'T FEEL LIKE PRACTICING FOR SOMETHING LAME LIKE DEFENSE TO BEGIN WITH!

COME ON!! ARE YOU REALLY THAT DESPERATE TO GET EVERYONE TO LOVE YOU?!
YOU NEVER KNOW! IT MIGHT BE SUPER FUN IF WE TRY!
ATHLETA

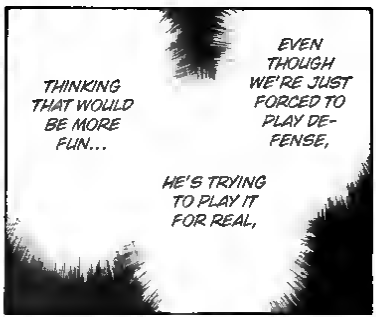

HUH? WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HUH?! WHAT IS HE!?

SO I WANT TO TRY AND GO AS FAR AS I CAN
WE ENDED UP PLAYING DEFENSE,
I'M JUST THINKING THAT IT'D BE MORE FUN IF WE TRY HARDER
IF YOU'RE ASKING ABOUT BEING LIKED, OF COURSE I DON'T WANT TO BE HATED. BUT .

I THINK THERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN NEVER TELL UNTIL YOU REALLY TRY.
ATHLETIC


THIS GUY...
ALTHOUGH I'M SURE THERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN TELL WITHOUT TRYING.

I DON'T GET IT...
YOU CAN QUIT IF IT'S BORING.
BUT KAGEYAMA-KUN'S THE ONLY ONE ON THE TEAM WHO LIVES CLOSE BY.


EVEN THOUGH WE'RE JUST FORCED TO PLAY DE-FENSE,
THINKING THAT WOULD BE MORE FUN...
HE'S TRYING TO PLAY IT FOR REAL,

F-FINE... IF IT'S ONLY A LITTLE.
REALLY?! THEN LET'S DO OUR BEST TILL FIELD DAY!!
HUH, EVERY-DAY ..?!

SO YOU CUT LIKE THIS
IF HE COMES THIS WAY?

Yay~
Yay~
Yay~
Yay~
Go~
ONE WEEK LATER, FIELD DAY

GO CLASS 3!!
5-2
5-3
1
1
SECOND HALF, TIED IN OVER-TIME!!
THERE'S NO TIME LEFT!!
ORA!
TAKE THIS!!
HERE, HERE.
10
Puff
Ha
Phew
DON'T COME THIS WAY~ STAY AWAY!
5-3
影山

HERE COMES KAGEYAMA-KUN!!
GO!
AH
AH...
FII
10
HE'S GETTING THROUGH!
STOP HIM!!
HERE HE COMES!!
SHOOT
T-THIS IS THE WORST SITUATION
MOVE MOVE!
AND THAT'S THE BEST ATHLETE IN CLASS 2, HARADA!!
HE'S SO GOOD AT DRIB-BLING!!
10

AND WATCH THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR OPPONENT'S LOWER BODY.
THAT WAY, YOU CAN DETECT HIS MOVEMENTS BETTER.
IN DEFENSE, RATHER THAN JUST STARING AT THE BALL,
IT'S BETTER TO DROP TO YOUR OPPONENT'S HEIGHT
DROP TO OPPONENT'S HEIGHT AND
WATCH HIS LOWER BODY
5 - 3
Kageyama
BRING IT ON!
HERE I COME!
HERE!!
ORA!
3

CRAP!! NO GOOD!
ヨロ…
WOAH!
5 - 3
Mario
MARIO!!

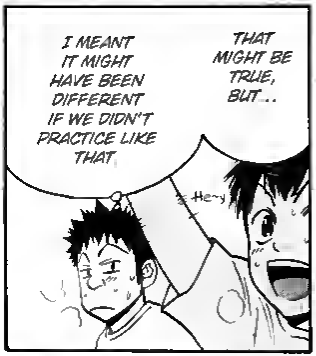
WHA-
DAH!
CRAP!
OOPS!
OH?!!
YAGI-KUN!!

GO UEDA!
ボン!
STOP
YAGI!
YES!!
GOO OOO OO!!
5-3
STOP HIM! STOP HIM!!
STUPID, IT'S HIM!!
CRAP!
PASS! PASS!!

WE WON!!
OH~!!
2
Phew~
5 - 3
Kageyama
GOOD BLOCKING, EI-CHAN AND KAGEYA-MA!!
NICE PASS!!
NICE SHOT, YAGI!!
AWESOME~ THAT WAS SUPER AWE-SOME!!

HUH?
BUT THAT WAS ALL THANKS TO YOU.

Y-YEAH...
WE DID IT, KAGEYA-MA-KUN!!
5-3
Maruo

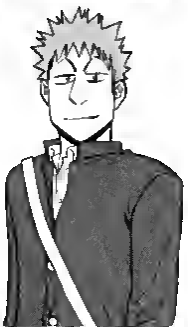

I MEANT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IF WE DIDN'T PRACTICE LIKE THAT.
THAT MIGHT BE TRUE, BUT...
Hey~

WE STOPPED HIM TO-GETHER.
NO WAY, I WAS ABLE TO STOP HIM BECAUSE KAGEYAMA-KUN SLOWED HIM DOWN FIRST.
2

BUT HE MIGHT JUST BE COOLER THAN I IMAGINED.

HE'S A WEIRD GUY.

Ha ha ha ha
Rustle
Rustle
KAGEYA-MA!!
AFTER THAT, WE BECAME BEST FRIENDS.
OH~ EI-CHAN. TENNIS TODAY, TOO?
YUP! YOU'VE GOT EXTRACUR-RICULARS, RIGHT?
See ya~
YEAH
CAUSE I'M REALLY GLAD THAT I STARTED TENNIS.
SAYING ALL YOU'RE DOING IS PLAYING TENNIS EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE GOING TO BE A SENIOR.
THAT'S RIGHT OUR ADVISOR, YAMAMOTO-SENSEI, WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
Why're you so popular with the teachers?
YAMAMOTO-SENSEI TOO, HUH .. TRY TO CONVINCE HIM FOR ME.

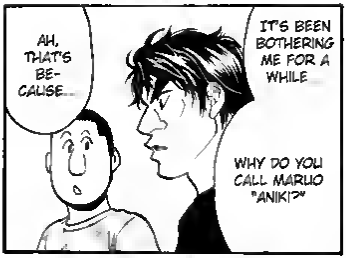


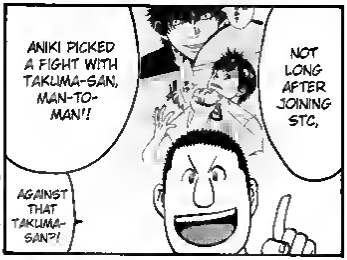
GO EI-CHAN, GO!

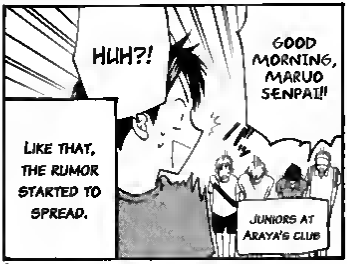
SPECIAL CHAPTER | THE END

Baby Steps ⑭ Extra

==RUMOR ON STC==







Hello, this is Katsuki

The special chapter at the end of this volume is the one that was on Coca Cola's mobile site. I always wanted to have a story on how Ei-chan and Kageyama became friends, so I had the chance to make one thanks to the opportunity.
Their classmates appear in the middle school. Ei-chan can be misunderstood by many people because he's an honor student, but Kageyama has an important role of taking care of Ei-chan on such occasions.

With the gathering of all players from the prefecture, Kanto Junior will start in the next volume.

In other words, it's Summer.

The third Summer since he started tennis.

Then see you next volume.

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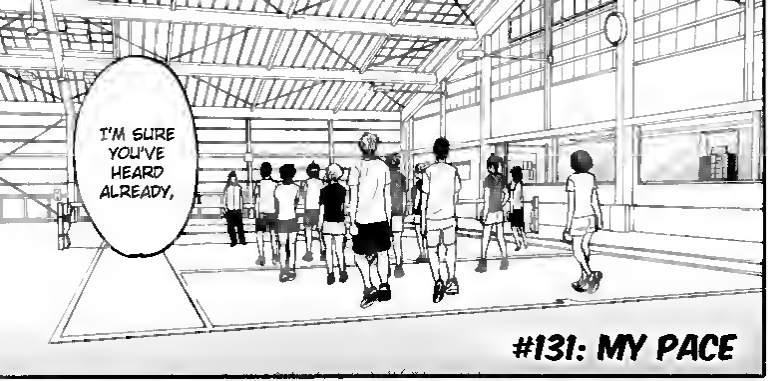
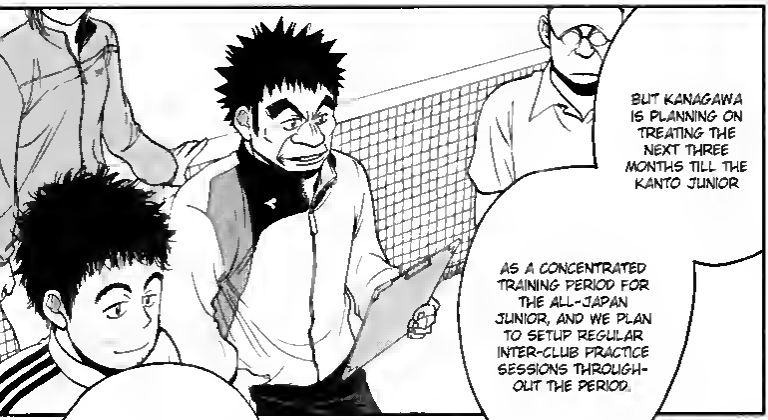
ベイビーステップ

RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggia
Proofreader: Galaaza
Cleaner: Stark
Typesetter: Stark
Q-Checker: Galaaza


I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD ALREADY,

#131: MY PACE


BUT KANAGAWA IS PLANNING ON TREATING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS TILL THE KANTO JUNIOR
AS A CONCENTRATED TRAINING PERIOD FOR THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR, AND WE PLAN TO SETUP REGULAR INTER-CLUB PRACTICE SESSIONS THROUGH-OUT THE PERIOD.

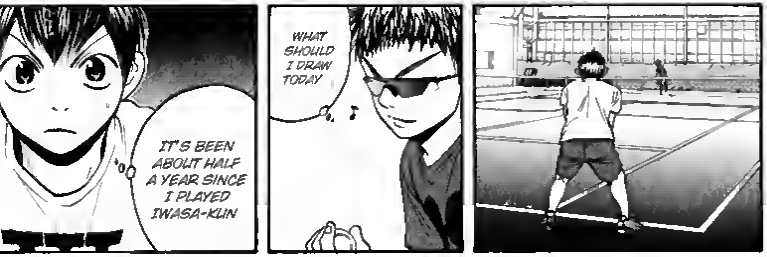
ONLY THE SELECT JUNIOR PLAYERS WHO HAVE HAD DISTINCT ACCOM-PLISHMENTS IN THE PAST ARE GATHERED HERE.
MENTALLY FINISH

IT'LL BE AN INTENSE MATCH-ORIENTED PRACTICE AMONGST PLAYERS YOU AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH. THE GOAL IS AN ALL-AROUND IMPROVEMENT IN KANAGAWA'S SKILLS.
THEN WE'LL HAVE MATCHES AFTER BASIC WARM-UPS,
SO PLEASE GO TO YOUR DESIGNATED COURT IF YOUR NAME IS CALLED.
IT'S A CHANCE FOR ME TO ACCUMULATE MATCH EXPERIENCE!!
ドキ
ドキ
ドキ

ORAA!!
HEY... ARAYA-KUN!!
OTHERS CAN'T CONCENTRATE CAUSE YOU'RE TOO LOUD!
Penguin

YOU'LL NEVER GET STRONG IF YOU'RE BOTHERED BY THE LITTLE STUFF!!
YOURS ARE WAY TOO LOUD!
THERE ARE PLENTY OF GUYS WHO ARE SHOUTING!
YOU'LL NEVER GET ANY GIRLS IF YOU KEEP THAT UP!
HEY! BE SERIOUS YOU TWO!!
WHAT?!

YONEX
THEN, MARUO-KUN, SHALL WE START?
IWASA-KUN... YUP, LET'S DO IT.
THEIR RALLIES ARE SO HIGH-LEVEL...
MAYBE THEY'VE GOT SOME INTERNAL TENSION CAUSE THEY'RE BOTH BASELINERS?


IT'S BEEN ABOUT HALF A YEAR SINCE I PLAYED IWASA-KUN
WHAT SHOULD I DRAW TODAY

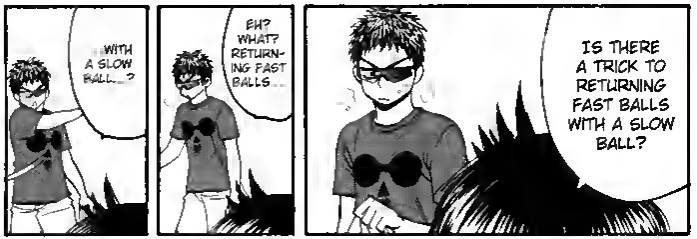
A TECHNIQUE TO HIT ANY KIND OF BALL, AT ANY SPEED, TO ANY LOCATION, AT ANY TIMING,
IS EXACTLY THE SKILL I NEED TO ACQUIRE FOR MY CHANGE-OF-PACE.
HE'S A STRANGE PLAYER WHO LIKES TO DRAW A PICTURE ON COURT RATHER THAN WIN THE GAME.
BECAUSE OF THAT, I COULD NEVER TELL WHERE HE WAS GOING TO HIT.
HAH!

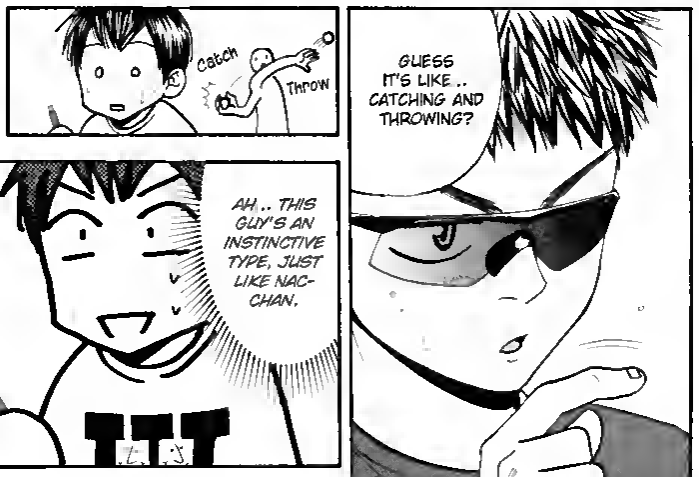
HA!
STRONG FLAT SHOT!!
FIRST, MY MOST POWERFUL SHOT..

NO TROUBLE WITH THIS ONE EITHER. A FLAT...!!
HOW ABOUT A LOW SLICE?
WOW... AS EXPECTED!
EVEN THOUGH IT'S EASIER TO MATCH A FAST BALL WITH A FAST BALL, HE MANAGED TO HIT IT SLOW WITH NO TROUBLE, AND IT'S PRETTY DEEP, TOO.
HE CAN CHANGE THE PACE WITH NO TROUBLE AT ALL.
REGARDLESS OF WHAT KIND OF BALL I HIT,
HE'S AMAZING...
OKAY!
IT SCARES ME TO IMAGINE WHAT THIS PERSON COULD DO IF HE WERE TO FOCUS ON WINNING RATHER THAN DRAWING PICTURES. .

FIRST, LET'S JUST WATCH CAREFULLY!
HOW IS IWASA-KUN CHANGING THE PACE SO EASILY?
HOW'S HE DIFFERENT FROM ME, OR ANY OTHER PLAYER?
AND WHAT KIND OF CHANGE-OF-PACE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE IN OFFENSE?

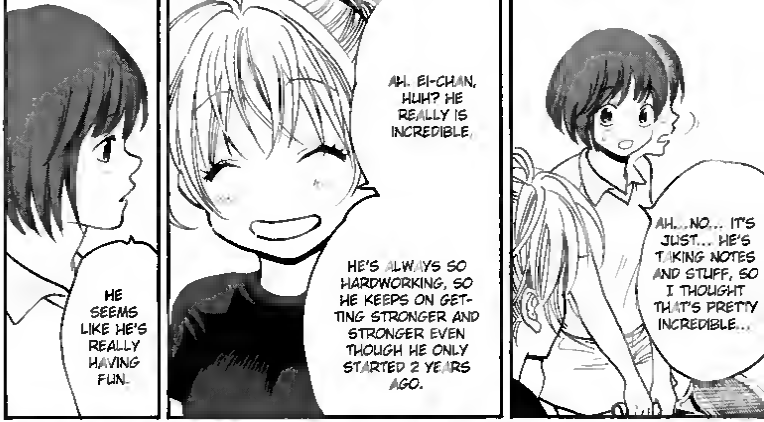
I'LL ASK HIM DIRECTLY ABOUT THINGS I CAN'T FIGURE OUT...
UMM.. IWASA-KUN, CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
OKAY, 5 MINUTE BREAK

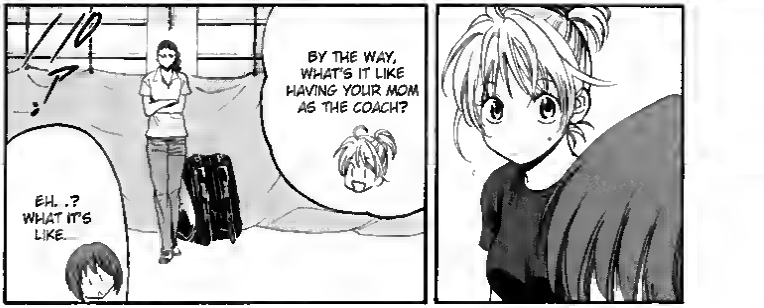

...WITH A SLOW BALL...?
EH? WHAT? RETURN-ING FAST BALLS...
IS THERE A TRICK TO RETURNING FAST BALLS WITH A SLOW BALL?

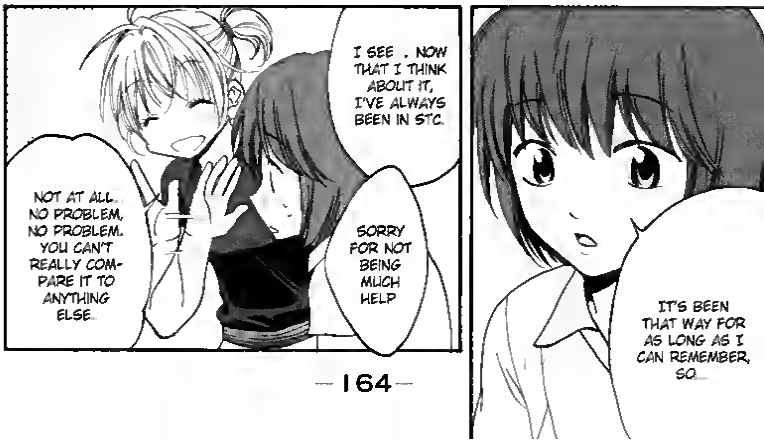

Catch
Throw
GUESS IT'S LIKE .. CATCHING AND THROWING?
AH.. THIS GUY'S AN INSTINCTIVE TYPE, JUST LIKE NAC-CHAN.

MARUO, NEXT IS WITH ARAYA.
YES!
UMM... CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC...?
HUH...? I THOUGHT THAT WAS PRETTY CLEAR.
I KNEW IT... GUESS I HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT BY MYSELF.
ARAYA-KUN IS THE NATION'S STRONGEST LEFT-HANDER.
HE'S THE BEST OPPONENT FOR GETTING USED TO LEFT-HANDED SHOTS.
HA!
I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE SHOTS FROM ANY OPPONENT AND CHANGE IT TO MY PACE.
I NEVER KNOW WHAT TYPE OF PLAYER I'LL FACE IN KANTO OR THE NATIONALS.

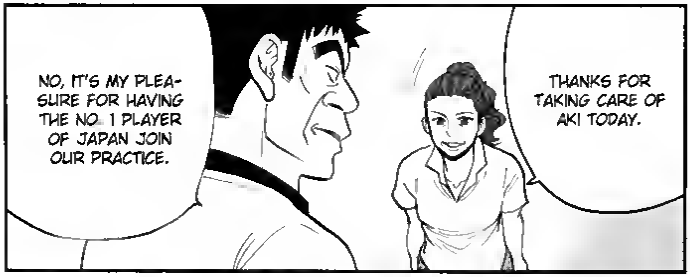
AMAZING... I'M FINDING MORE AND MORE THINGS TO DO WITHIN THE NEXT 3 MONTHS.
カキカキカキカキ
110ラ
110ラ
110ラ
110ラ
AKI-CHAN, WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'RE YOU STARING AT?
MARUO-KUN ARE YOU READY?
YUP!

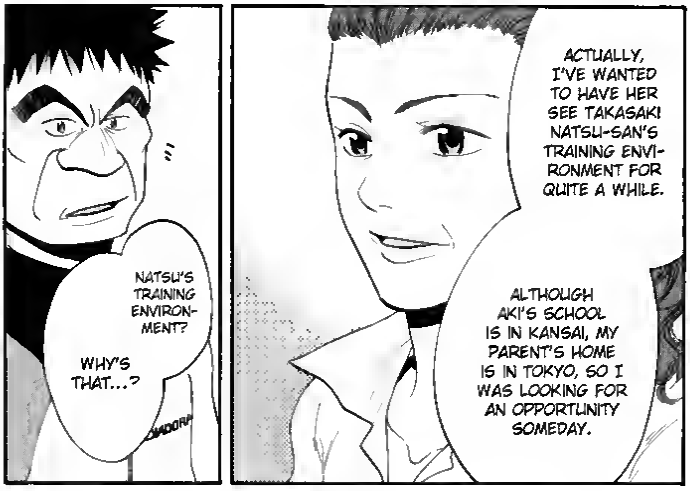

AH. EI-CHAN, HUH? HE REALLY IS INCREDIBLE.
HE'S ALWAYS SO HARDWORKING, SO HE KEEPS ON GETTING STRONGER AND STRONGER EVEN THOUGH HE ONLY STARTED 2 YEARS AGO.
HE SEEMS LIKE HE'S REALLY HAVING FUN.
AH...NO... IT'S JUST... HE'S TAKING NOTES AND STUFF, SO I THOUGHT THAT'S PRETTY INCREDIBLE...


BY THE WAY, WHAT'S IT LIKE HAVING YOUR MOM AS THE COACH?
EH..? WHAT IT'S LIKE...


I SEE . NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IN STC.
SORRY FOR NOT BEING MUCH HELP
NOT AT ALL. NO PROBLEM. NO PROBLEM. YOU CAN'T REALLY COMPARE IT TO ANYTHING ELSE.
IT'S BEEN THAT WAY FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, SO...

1-0
AH... YES
I THINK IT'S TIME TO SWITCH.


NO, IT'S MY PLEASURE FOR HAVING THE NO. 1 PLAYER OF JAPAN JOIN OUR PRACTICE.
THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF AKI TODAY.


NATSU'S TRAINING ENVIRONMENT?
WHY'S THAT...?
ACTUALLY, I'VE WANTED TO HAVE HER SEE TAKASAKI NATSU-SAN'S TRAINING ENVIRONMENT FOR QUITE A WHILE.
ALTHOUGH AKI'S SCHOOL IS IN KANSAI, MY PARENT'S HOME IS IN TOKYO, SO I WAS LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY SOMEDAY.

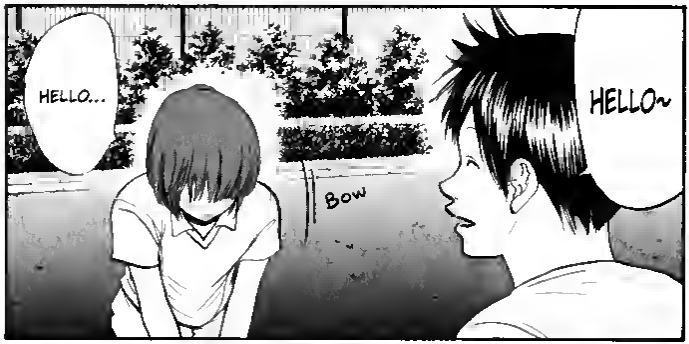
I BELIEVE NATSU-SAN IS THE ONLY PLAYER WHO HAS THE POSSIBILITY OF DEFEATING AKI IN THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR THIS YEAR
AND THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO HAS BEEN GETTING SMALLER AND SMALLER EVERY YEAR
DESPITE THAT, AKI HERSELF DOESN'T SEEM TO FEEL ANY ALARM AT ALL.
SO I THOUGHT IF SHE WERE TO SEE THE ENVIRONMENT HER RIVAL'S IN...
I SEE... BUT WHY DOESN'T SHE FEEL ANY ALARM?
SHE'S ONLY BEEN PRACTICING WITH PARTNERS I'VE CHOSEN EVER SINCE SHE WAS A CHILD
SO I THINK THAT MADE HER LACK ANY FEELING OF COMPETITION AGAINST PLAYERS IN THE SAME AGE GROUP

I'VE BEEN TELLING HER THAT OVER AND OVER, BUT I CAN'T TELL IF SHE'S LISTENING OR NOT...
HMM. . WELL, THERE COULD BE A LOT OF THINGS
I THINK SHE'S AT THAT AGE.
?
SHE ALWAYS USED TO FOLLOW EVERYTHING I SAID WITHOUT QUESTION, BUT..
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE SHE'S STARTING TO THINK FOR HERSELF.
THESE DAYS, SHE ALWAYS TAKES HER TIME WITH WHATEVER SHE DOES, SO IT'S BEEN PUTTING ME ON EDGE ..
ピー
OKAY, LET'S ALL TAKE A BREAK NOW
WE'LL START PLAYING MATCHES IN 15 MINUTES.

AH...

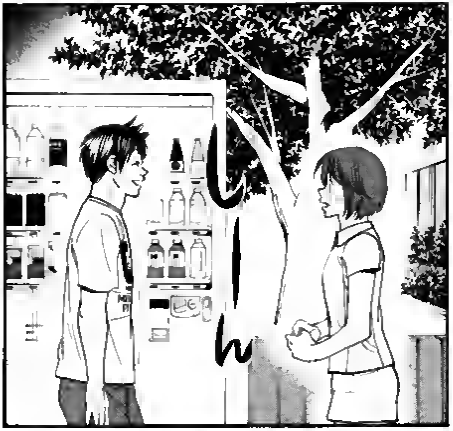
AH!

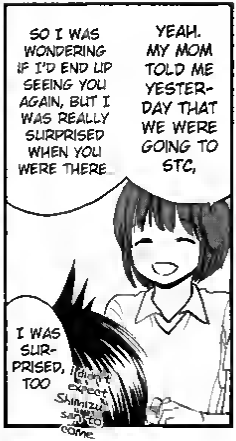
AH... NICE BREEZE~
Phew~


HELLO...
HELLO~
Bow

AH HUH?! IT'S SUPER DENTED!!
UM
YUP. YOU'RE SHIMIZU-SAN, RIGHT? WE MET DURING INDOOR SELECTIONALS LAST TIME
And the No.1 female player in Japan
YOU WERE HAVING TROUBLE WITH YOUR CELL PHONE BAT-TERY...

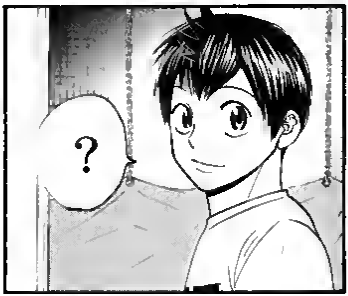
UMM... DO YOU REMEMBER ME?


Ilh


SO I WAS WONDERING IF I'D END UP SEEING YOU AGAIN, BUT I WAS REALLY SURPRISED WHEN YOU WERE THERE
YEAH. MY MOM TOLD ME YESTERDAY THAT WE WERE GOING TO STC,
I WAS SURPRISED, TOO
I can't expect Shimizu and Saeko come.

AH... PLEASE WAIT A SECOND
THEN, LET'S DO OUR BEST WITH PRACTICE MATCHES

AH... UMM...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TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 15

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RAWs: Share
Translator: Auggia
Proofreader: Galaaza
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